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THE TRANSVAAL WAR

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Pretoria and Camp during the siege.

THE TRANSVAAL WAR

1880-81

EDITED BY

LADY BELLAIRS

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLXXXV

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STACK ANNEX

DEDICATED

TO

THE GALLANT MEN

(COMRADES OF MY HUSBAND)

FORMING THE BRITISH GARRISONS DURING THE TRANSVAAL WAR,

WHO, BY THEIR BRILLIANT DEFENCE OF THE POSITIONS

IN THEIR CHARGE,

ADDED RENOWN TO, AND KEPT UNSULLIED,

THE PRESTIGE OF BRITISH ARMS.

1965003

PREFACE.

The accounts given in these pages, as well as the opinions expressed, are mainly based upon official documents which have already appeared in print—in Parliamentary Blue-books, Transvaal Government Gazettes, and other publications,—but, as these sources of information are scattered and troublesome to get at, it has been thought convenient to reprint, in Appendix or footnote form, extracts from some of the despatches, orders, and correspondence to which reference is made.

In the first chapter we have endeavoured to indicate the causes which brought about a most unnecessary war, and the further errors which led to a state of unpreparedness to cope effectively with it. And in the last we have treated of the way in which that war, after having passed through certain phases,—the besieged garrisons heroically holding their own, but the Natal column beaten back in the attempt, with miscalculated means, to relieve them,—was abruptly brought to an inglorious close.

The second and tenth chapters tell the pitiful tale of disasters and reverses incurred — Bronkhorst Spruit, Laing's Nek, Ingogo, and Majuba — through the too common fault of making light of your enemy.

In the intervening chapters we have related the stories of the besieged garrisons: how seven detachments of troops, aided by volunteers—Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Rustenburg, Marabastadt, Lydenburg, Standerton, and Wakkerstroom—successfully defended their posts under enormous difficulties, such as have rarely fallen to the lot of British soldiers. Thrown suddenly on their own resources and responsibilities, isolated at widely distant points of a territory almost as extensive as France, beset by foes without, and—in the case of Pretoria—secret foes within, fighting day by day for three weary months, in the midst of troubles, anxieties, discomforts, even—at Potchefstroom—want of food, and with depressing, disheartening influences all round them, they yet beat back, and made themselves respected by, the enemy.

Hidden away in a remote country, these garrison-posts were without special correspondents or telegraph wire to enable them to supply a daily summary of their proceedings, and claim the attention of the public at home. They could not—as seems so often arranged nowadays by would-be heroes in the estimation of their countrymen—get delicately rendered little *communiqués* about their doings inserted in the papers, or

even—as perhaps more generally done—prompt "their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts," to do this wire-pulling, and judiciously keep them constantly before the public. So it happened that, at the close of the war, the people of England knew little of the facts connected with, or the sacrifices made for, the defence of the Transvaal capital, and other towns and military positions so well retained in possession. Their attention—naturally enough—had been directed to Sir George Colley's movements the whole time; and when there came continued reverses in that quarter, immediately followed by unsatisfactory peace negotiations, they—naturally enough again—evinced a disposition—fomented by some from political and a few from personal motives—to bury the whole campaign in oblivion. The official judgment to that end may be said to have already gone forth before even tedious communication could be reopened with the interior of the Transvaal. Thus the Transvaal force suffered for faults committed elsewhere, and its distinguished and meritorious services in a most unusually trying campaign were passed by with but little notice or recognition.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Twickenham.

[1] Only about three dozen officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates belonging to the whole Transvaal force, inclusive of volunteers, were rewarded—receiving brevet-promotion, honours, or medals.

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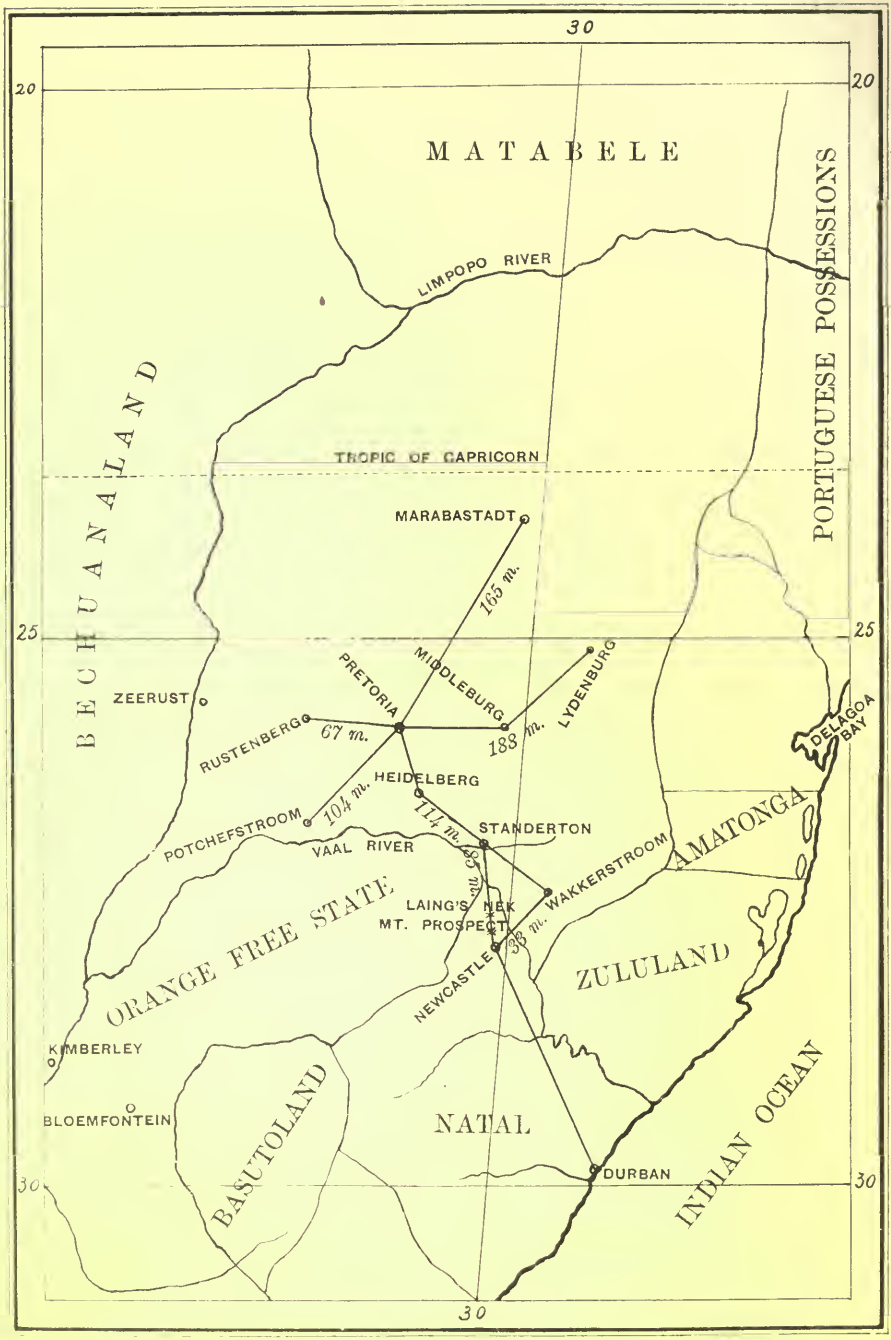


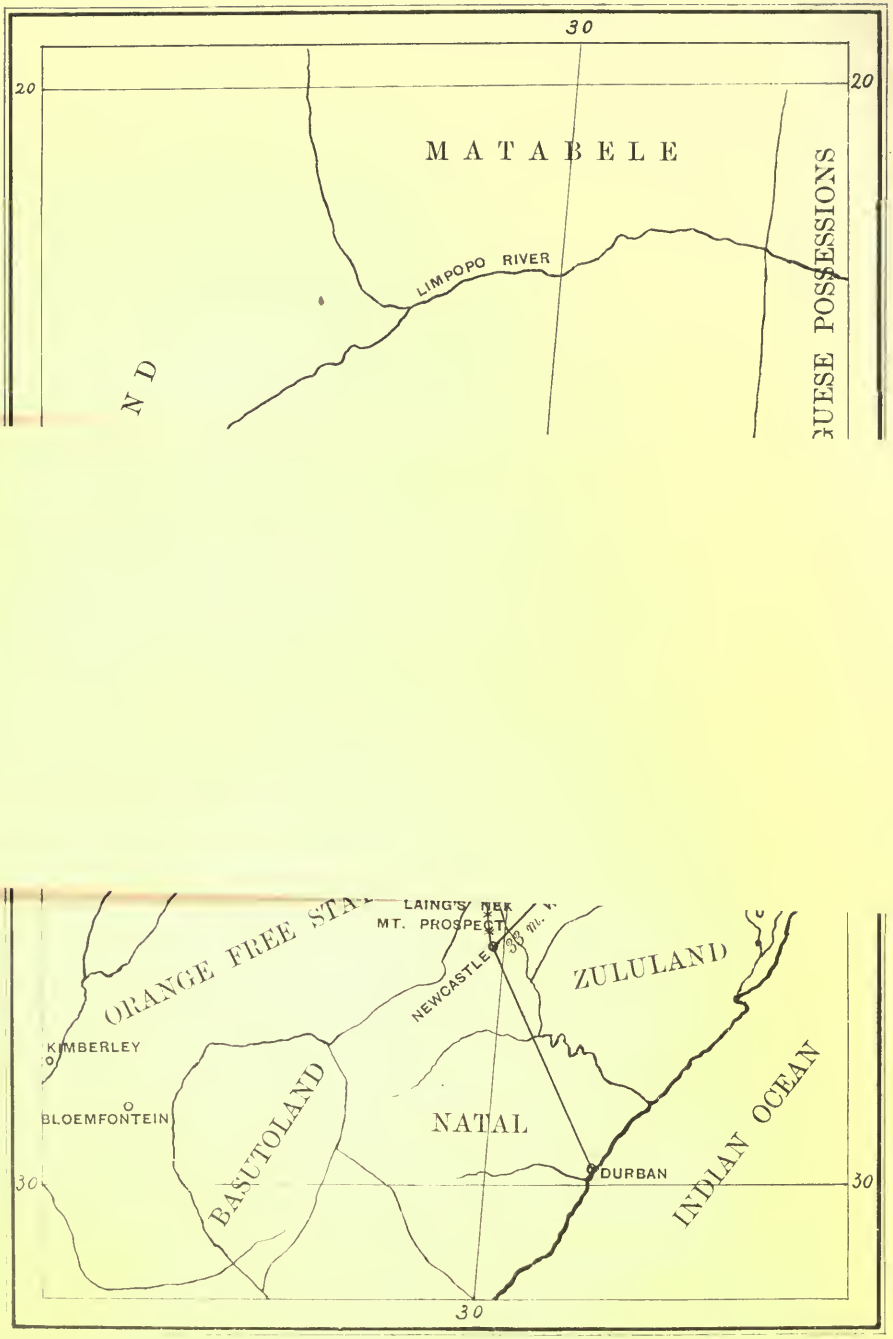
British Positions in the Transvaal.

THE TRANSVAAL WAR, 1880-81.

ERRATA.

Page 19, line 6 from foot, *for* "Inhloblane" *read* "Inhlobane."
" 159, line 7 from foot, *for* "Dr Sheen" *read* "Dr Skeen."
" 185, first line, *for* "note" *read* "page."
" 221, sidenote, *for* "Baboon" *read* "Baboons."

plete. Intercommunication by railways will in due time do much, and closer community of interests, brought about by the creation of railway, telegraph, postal, customs, and other unions, together with the adoption of a common native policy, may be expected to educate gradually the local governments and peoples in favour of the change. Still, the result will scarcely be achieved until the self-interest of each Colony or State demands it, and ability is shown by each country to bear, financially and otherwise, the



British Positions in the Transvaal.

THE TRANSVAAL WAR, 1880-81.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BOER REVOLT.

CHAP. I.

Confederation in the future.

THE confederation of the several Colonies and States of South Africa will, there can be little doubt, become an accomplished fact at some future day; but, in the natural course of events, the process of assimilation must be slow, and take many years yet to complete. Intercommunication by railways will in due time do much, and closer community of interests, brought about by the creation of railway, telegraph, postal, customs, and other unions, together with the adoption of a common native policy, may be expected to educate gradually the local governments and peoples in favour of the change. Still, the result will scarcely be achieved until the self-interest of each Colony or State demands it, and ability is shown by each country to bear, financially and otherwise, the

CHAP. I.

burden of self-defence against possible interior or exterior native risings.

Attempt to force on confederation led to war.

Such a slow *modus operandi*, though carrying with it the advantage of being in accord with the phlegmatic character of the large majority of the peoples to be dealt with, did not, in 1876-77, satisfy the Imperial Government, and an onward—as it has been termed—policy was, in preference, determined on. This too great eagerness to carry out a confederation scheme defeated its own object, leading, as it did, to a too hasty annexation of the Transvaal—the primary cause of the Zulu war, and bringing in its train the Boer rebellion.

An onward policy requires constant military success.

An onward policy, pursued in countries whose inhabitants are not wholly in agreement with the order of government enforced, requires continued military occupation and success all round, or failure occurring in any quarter may cause an ultimate collapse of the whole system. Isandlwhana may be said to have sounded the knell of, and raised a strong revulsion of English feeling against, such a policy. Even the restoration of prestige to our arms at Ulundi did not avail to change the current of that feeling; and very probably the Zulu war, in succeeding generations, will be better remembered by the disaster of Isandlwhana than the victory of Ulundi. Had all gone well at the outset of that campaign—as was reasonably anticipated must be the case—how different would have been the result of such success to the

whole of South Africa, and to those concerned in the government of that land at the time!

Causes of ill success at commencement of Zulu war.

It was well understood, from the character of the Zulus and their military organisation, that the issue of the first serious encounter in our favour would practically end the campaign. The greater, therefore, was the need for caution to ensure that result. The British force originally in the field, supplemented by colonial and native contingents, was sufficient to have assured the defeat and subjugation of the enemy in a short and comparatively inexpensive war, but for lamentable omissions,—a faulty plan of campaign, too great division of forces, want of ordinary military precautions, and the too common British error of despising your enemy.

Frequency of military errors conveys a lesson against lightly engaging in war.

The numerous grave military errors committed even since Isandlwhana—from similar causes, notwithstanding the terrible warning then given — should surely tend to make statesmen pause in the future before lightly engaging in war, and staking their reputations on the chances of military success. The miserable surprise at Inhlobane[1] in Zululand, the disastrous defeat at Maiwand in Afghanistan, and the successive reverses — Laing's Nek, Ingogo, and

[1] Sometimes spelt Zlobane. Fortunately for Colonel Evelyn Wood, he succeeded the following day—after he had withdrawn behind his laager defences at Kambula—in repulsing the Zulu attack on his position; so that the news of the two conflicts being mixed up and arriving together, little notice was taken of the surprise of his troops the first day at Inhlobane, and the consequent heavy losses suffered on that occasion.

CHAP. I.

Majuba—endured from the Boers on the Transvaal-Natal border, should convey a lasting lesson in this respect. If a German critic is correct, we even narrowly escaped another "dark passage in English military history" in the Egyptian campaign;[1] and Tamai in the Soudan campaign furnishes a further example.

Position of the Transvaal after annexation.

The annexation of the Transvaal was carried out in the early part of 1877, when it seems to have been expected by the authors of that act that the people, after having been accustomed to republican or even individual independence ever since the country was first settled, would quickly become reconciled to the high-handed change made to a Crown-colony form of government—a form from which our colonies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and at the Cape had for some time past shaken themselves free. The declarations made at the time by Sir Theophilus Shepstone had led the people to suppose that the withdrawal of their liberties was intended to be merely temporary, and that self-government would, in due course, follow a short transition period. How delusive were the promises thus held out, time plainly showed. High Commissioner and Administrator were replaced by other men, and a Conservative gave way

[1] "Graver results than those of the 3d August might have been produced by the surprise, as General Havelock calls it, of the English vanguard by a more numerous body of Egyptian troops at Kassassin. It is due solely to the timely and gallant interposition of the cavalry under Sir Drury Lowe that the fight did not constitute one of the dark passages in English military history."—Contemporary Review, April 1883.

to a Liberal Government in England, but the promised free institutions were still kept back. It would seem that, until the time came when it was at last seen that the prospect of forcing on a confederation was hopeless—in June 1880, when the Cape Parliament rejected the proposal for a Conference on that head—it was deemed politic to withhold the grant of self-government, in the hope that the malcontent Boers might be the more disposed to fall in with the views of the Imperial Government, and lend their influence towards confederation, in the desire to obtain representative institutions themselves, by joining the self-governed Cape Colony.[1] These expectations were doomed to be disappointed, and the Cape Colony, having declined to join in a Conference, unmistakably intimated its intention of standing by itself for the present. The time had thus, then, clearly arrived for the adoption of one of two courses with regard to the Transvaal—either to annul the annexation, or endeavour to satisfy the legitimate wishes of its people by giving them representative government.[2] Never-

[1] This object is developed in the last paragraph of a despatch—Feb. 19, 1880—from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to Sir Garnet Wolseley. See Blue-book (c.—2505), No. 60, March 1880.

[2] The following extract from a letter we have seen, written from the Transvaal, on the 6th July 1880, by an officer then occupying a high military position, will show that the danger of not then meeting the wants of the Boers was not unforeseen by all on the spot at that period:—

"The Confederation Conference proposals laid before the Cape Parliament having been shelved, the Transvaal agitators, Messrs Kruger, Joubert, and Jorissen, who have been awaiting the result of the debate at Cape Town, will now, no doubt, return to stump this province. Had the Conference taken place, these gentlemen would probably have been provided for as delegates, and thus further agitation against annexation have been prevented. Should the Home Government grant greater

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theless, this opportunity was allowed to slip by; nothing was attempted in the latter direction; and smooth despatches continued to be received at the Colonial Office in Downing Street, reporting to the effect that the financial condition of the country was improving, and that the people, while paying their taxes, were quieting down.

Course of action which, had it been followed, might have resulted in Transvaal remaining British territory.

Had we been desirous of preserving the connection, the grant of responsible government, assented to in time—even to within a few weeks of the actual outbreak of hostilities—might have been the means of the Transvaal remaining British territory. Though dead-locks, rendering the task of government difficult, would, no doubt, have followed, means would have been found there, as elsewhere, to overcome them, and any general insurrection would have been avoided. Had the gift of such a popular measure been also coupled with the loan of a million sterling, towards the construction of a railway from Delagoa Bay, the results gained would soon have proved that a master-stroke of statesmanship had been made. Such an expenditure, while eventually turning out financially a good investment, would have worked as an insurance against disaffection, by gratifying a long-felt ambition of the Boers—communication by

freedom, and an elective franchise, instead of the present nominee system in force for the Transvaal House of Assembly, then there might be some outlet for the energies of these men, but a deadlock in government would soon ensue. Failing this, it may be feared that they will persuade the Boers to resume their obstructive tactics, verging on open hostilities, though probably never actually coming to fighting."

the shortest route with the finest seaport in South Africa; creating a market for agricultural produce, and opening out the mineral wealth of the land; and causing, for the purpose of making the railway, and through the greater development of the country, such a flow of emigration into the province as would speedily have neutralised the power of the Dutch element. There were those who, early after the annexation, foresaw the advantages to be thus gained, and advocated such a loan. The Boer war cost a great deal more than a million in money, and something more besides!

Danger of legislating counter to popular opinion.

There is a principle—which seems to have now fairly taken root in England—by which our statesmen are usually guided or influenced in legislating for their countrymen at home, that extreme caution is expedient, if not absolutely necessary, not to go beyond or outside of public opinion. Unfortunately this safe general rule has not always been sufficiently attended to by our proconsuls in Crown-governed dependencies, the mother country suffering proportionately. In a popular sense, and outside certain party and missionary circles, it was a matter of indifference to the mass of Englishmen whether we kept any hold on the Transvaal or not. We might well have receded—any time before the Boer outbreak—from the mistake originally committed in annexing that province. It would not have been the first time that, for the sake of expediency, we had voluntarily abandoned territory we had acquired. On South African soil, in former years, we had can-

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celled the annexation of British Kaffraria, and had restored the Orange Free State to the Boers. Not to mention the many places which fell into our possession during the wars of the last and present century, and which we gave up when peace ensued, the cession of the Ionian Islands in recent years may be cited. Tangier also, held by us for more than sixty years during the seventeenth century, was abandoned as too troublesome and costly to keep, owing to incessant attacks from outside.

But, whatever may have been the feeling in England, there can be little question as to the direction it took in the Transvaal after annexation. The various mass meetings, held at intervals, convened and attended by the Boers—the landed proprietors of the country, a singularly quiet, undemonstrative class, forming the large majority of the white population—gave unanimous expression to the desire to be cut adrift from us. No attempt was made to dispute this fact, by obtaining a vote on the point by ballot or otherwise; and any counter-wishes expressed by the trading or other sections of the inhabitants were far outweighed by the numbers on the other side.

Badly advised as to the real condition and sentiment of the country, the Imperial Government did not perceive the urgent necessity for giving way to popular feeling. No soothing concessions were made. On the contrary, it was notified that the act of annexation was irrevocable, and the High Commissioner in 1879 publicly emphasised the decision

by declaring that, "so long as the sun shines, the Transvaal will remain British territory."

Soothing influence exercised by Sir T. Shepstone when Administrator.

Whatever blame may attach to Sir Theophilus Shepstone for his share in too hastily annexing the Transvaal, he certainly subsequently exercised a calming influence, which was absent after his departure. During his administration there existed a certain degree of sympathy between the governing body and the Dutch community; but, with his removal, all touch with the Boer class ceased.[1] Sir Theophilus could speak Dutch, and understood the Boer character. During the period for *Nachtmaal*,[2] when the farmers from the outlying districts *trekked*[3] into Pretoria with their families, often from long distances, in order to attend the services of their church, he would be seen in the large market square, passing

[1] Extract from "The Boers at Home," 'Blackwood's Magazine' for December 1881: "Sir Owen Lanyon, who followed Sir Theophilus Shepstone, proved a most unfortunate selection; exactly the man to rub up the Boers the wrong way, and that with no wish on his part, but with the desire to do all that he could for them compatible with his duty. To begin with, he was a soldier; and to a Boer a *rooi batjee* is the incarnation of all that is bad in the English Government. He belonged to a West India regiment, and the cleverer Boers were not slow in finding out that these are black regiments. To associate or have anything to do with blacks, except to make them work, or *sjambook* them if they don't work hard, is an unpardonable crime in a Boer's eyes. Worse than all, the Governor was a man of swarthy complexion, and they at once started the idea that he was of black descent himself; carrying their hatred of the race to such a height, that I am told a Boer one day said to him to his face that he would not be ruled by a black man. Of course the idea was utterly false, the Governor being as pure-bred an Irishman as any other; but it was spread about, notwithstanding, and did much harm to him and his government."

[2] The Lord's Supper.

[3] Journeyed.

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from waggon to waggon, and among the tents, exchanging familiar greetings with all, and indulging their love for talk over their own affairs, and argument on political matters. All this being suited to their habits and customs, and he being easy of access to all who chose to call at Government House to discuss questions with him, rendered him peculiarly fitted to gauge popular feeling, as well as to moderate extreme opinions. It was said that many a Boer, after conversing with him on some imaginary grievance, personal or otherwise, would depart acknowledging that he saw the matter discussed in a different light from what he did before. Had Sir Theophilus Shepstone continued to administer the government, one cannot but think that he would have been more alive to the danger of delaying, for too long, a return to a representative form of government, and, instead of prophesying smooth things, would have warned the Imperial Government to give way, in time to have averted the Boer rising,—the natural production of previous indifference, vacillation, or procrastination.

Imprudence of withholding representative institutions.

Their pastoral farms being of great extent—generally upwards of 6000 acres each—dotted over the more fertile parts of a country estimated to have an area of 120,000 square miles,—the Boers—numbering about 40,000 souls—from their scattered, and more or less necessarily isolated condition of life, are naturally a slow-thinking, independent people, disliking change, especially when brought upon them

without their consent or instrumentality. Yet these men, if only judiciously treated, and allowed the full liberty of debate to which they have always been accustomed, could be persuaded, little by little, to acquiesce in measures which, attempted to be hastily thrust upon them without due consultation, would only entail stolid opposition and excite disaffection. Discussion with them—as with others nearer home—acts as a safety-valve. The pity of it was that this protective remedy was not appreciated by those in authority, and that instead of discussion being utilised and directed in a representative assembly, the Volksraad—the representative Parliament before annexation—remained closed. With the Boers, more than any people, it was incumbent upon us to pursue a policy which aimed at carrying them with us, in making any alteration in their laws or customs, and thus avoid playing the part of a paternal Government—urging on fresh legislation, however beneficial, neither asked nor wished for—without taking into our counsel those most affected by our action. The men who had by their courage and endurance gained possession of the territory, and had spread homesteads, flocks, and herds over the land; who had, notwithstanding all that has been averred to the contrary, managed their affairs fairly well—sufficiently so for their wants, according to their lights,—were now set aside, and deemed unfitted to have a voice in their own government. They were told, in hazy language, to wait patiently, when perhaps hereafter they might be trusted with some share in the direc-

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tion of their country's affairs. Being a patient people, they did wait for some years, meanwhile trying to make the authorities placed over them, and the Imperial Government, believe that eventually their patience must give way, and that delay in giving them back their freedom would certainly cause them to rise. But the local, who were responsible for keeping the imperial, authorities well informed of the state of the country and attitude of the people, did not believe them; but credited them with being only temporarily stirred up by professed agitators and adventurers from Holland, and looked upon them as altogether too lethargic and cowardly to attempt any overt action, their threats as too laughable and bombastic to have any reality of purpose in them. So, having formed a totally wrong estimate of the people under their rule and control, the local Government went on in the even tenor of their way, initiating fresh "beneficial" legislation, and assimilating certain of the laws to the more advanced ones of the Cape and Natal; but, before all, striving to stand well at Downing Street, by endeavouring to produce a good financial balance-sheet—all the time profoundly ignorant of the increasing irritation around, and apparently indifferent to the feelings of the large majority whose wishes ran counter to the policy adopted.

Resistance of Boers to system of direct taxation.

The Boers had often proved restive individually, and sometimes collectively under taxation, even before we took over the country. Resistance to the tax-collector was not offered for the first time

under our rule. This is clearly set forth in despatches from the Administrator in 1881; but Sir Owen Lanyon, while seeking to show that such resistance has resulted from the naturally lawless and turbulent character of the Boers, has apparently failed to draw the obvious lesson and conclusion which the historical details given, properly read, afford, that the opposition—exhibited at different periods, often causing serious commotion—plainly originated from the common dislike to *direct* taxation, and that the intelligent remedy to guard against such antagonism and possible conflict in the future, would have been, at an early period, to have varied the system to one of *indirect* taxation.

Excluding the inhabitants of towns—under 10,000—the white population of the province may be said to have consisted of but one class, landowners, who, with their families and some natives, work their own farms. The direct taxes levied on each farm may therefore be viewed as virtually a kind of poll-tax on the majority of the population—an objectionable form of raising revenue, well calculated to excite discontent.

The large increase which had taken place in the revenue during 1880, was, no doubt—as Sir Owen Lanyon reported[1]—in part due to "an improved system of collection and supervision;" but the constant pressure therefrom, brought to bear upon the Landdrosts and other officials charged with the collection, caused these officers, in their turn, to exercise

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2950), No. 24, June 1881.

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greater urgency than had previously been customary, and more than probably contributed to increase the general irritation and discontent around. Even arrears were claimed for bygone years, which the old South African Republic had neglected or had been unable to collect; and this often in doubtful cases, when, through the defective mode of keeping the public accounts of that period, no official proof was forthcoming as to the justice of the claims advanced, the tax-payers being required to show that they had already been settled. Wonderful ledgers and an elaborate system of accounts were introduced into all the country districts, which, however fitted for India or places having a long-practised official class, capable of complying with their requirements, were bewildering and little suited to the previous want of training of the Landdrosts and others of Dutch extraction. It may be that, in consequence, many of these men looked back with some regret to past days of greater official calm and slackness, and were the more inclined to sympathise in the avowed object of their fellow-countrymen, to bring back the old government.

Mistaken estimate of Boer courage.

The underestimate of the warlike qualities of the Boers, formed very generally by Englishmen before the outbreak—the main cause of subsequent reverses to our arms—was largely due to a too hasty judgment, engendered by generalising from the want of success attending the Boer *commandoes*[1] in prose-

[1] Burgher levies.

cuting the war against Sekukuni, and their failure to support their native allies, the Swazis, when storming his place, followed by their break-up and ignominious retirement in 1876. For political purposes, more than necessary was made of the cowardice and insubordination then exhibited, and the state of collapse which resulted. The war was a local one, which did not threaten other parts of the province. The men, *commandeered*[1] from other localities, were half-hearted, and without enthusiasm in carrying on hostilities against a chief who, many of them declared, was an independent one, who should have been originally left alone and his territory not encroached upon.

Boer tactics with hill-tribes.

The Boers have never experienced much difficulty in contending with the natives in the plains or open country; but, in the mountainous and rocky districts, offering natural defences, they have generally preferred slower tactics—bringing the enemy to terms by destroying their means of subsistence, together with constantly harassing them—rather than incur considerable loss of life through directly attacking or storming a strong position.

Our own difficulties in coercing hill-tribes.

We have not been without experience of the difficulties attending the coercion of hill-tribes. In 1853, Sir George Cathcart, although he had present a large well-appointed force of all arms, encountered a reverse when entering Basutoland, and was not sorry to close with Moshesh's proposals for peace which immediately followed. The later experiences of the Cape Colonial forces at Morosi's Mountain, and against the Basutos,

[1] Forced levy.

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may also be instanced. But, in the Transvaal, even after we had taken over the conduct of the Sekukuni war from the Boers, we did not progress satisfactorily until, on the close of the Zulu war, the arrival of an overwhelming force, under Sir Garnet Wolseley, rendered success no longer doubtful. After two and a half years' skirmishing around the position, with but one serious advance on our part to take it, Sekukuni still held out. Finally, in November 1879, Sir Garnet Wolseley deemed it prudent to bring up over 2000 British troops and Colonial levies, and to supplement these with 10,000 Swazis or other natives —finer warriors than those they had opposed to them. Sekukuni's place was then stormed and taken, our loss in killed being 8 Europeans and about 500 Swazis.

It is not easy to afford any intelligent explanation, other than that attempted above, of the lamentable mistake made in undervaluing the spirit of the Boers. Are we to suppose that our forefathers' feeling of contempt, and prejudices entertained against all foreigners, in the days when "Dutch courage" was a common proverb, had descended to some of the authorities in South Africa? The Duke of Wellington is said, when asked which nationality produced the bravest men, to have expressed his belief that all men were brave—a true remark, which might have been remembered with advantage at the time we are writing of, for it only requires a common enthusiastic cause to firmly knit together a people, and courage and intrepidity will not be found wanting. Annexa-

tion gave the required impetus, united the various elements, and created such a cause.[1]

If any one wishes to realise how far enthusiasm, and what is deemed a just cause, can lead a handful of men to cope successfully with overwhelming numbers of disciplined troops, let him read Mrs Bray's most interesting work, published in 1870, 'The Revolt of the Protestants of the Cevennes, with some account of the Huguenots, in the Seventeenth Century.' There he will learn how some 3000 peasants—who may be termed the progenitors of the Jouberts and other descendants of the French Huguenots to be found throughout the Transvaal and other parts of South Africa—were able to hold their own against 60,000 troops, the flower of the French army, under a marshal of France.[2]

[1] Extract from 'De Volksstem'—Report from a special correspondent on Boer meeting, December 10, 1879—Blue-book (c.—2505), South Africa, page 115:—

"When I walked back to my tent, and once more cast my eye on that assembled crowd, come together here from far and near, it seemed to me that the annexation, after all, had a beneficial result for the Transvaal people. It called into existence the mass meetings, of which we have now the fifth, and by that very means the various elements of the country were, as it were, securely knit together; and where formerly speaking about the Transvaal, we could only mention a thinly populated country, whose inhabitants were severed by many divergent interests, and, as it were, bound together by no single bond of union, these same inhabitants now come forward as one people, with their own history, and indissolubly bound together by the highest virtue—patriotism. Thus a bad cause sometimes brings forth some good results."

[2] An excellent essay on "The Camissards," based on Mrs Bray's and other works, was published in the October number of the 'Quarterly Review' for 1880—too late, unfortunately, for the intelligent reading and education of those who were most concerned on our side in bringing about the Boer revolt.

CHAP. I. — Characteristics of the Boers.

Generations of open-air activity, in one of the finest climates of the world, have made the Boers of the present day, in their physical attributes, one of the most favoured of races. Let any visitor to the Cape, willing to satisfy himself on this point, go into one of the Dutch country districts — say, for convenience, that of the Paarl, near to Cape Town— and take note of the splendid *physique* of the men and women generally met with, and then, on return to England, landing at Plymouth or Southampton, mark the contrast presented by the numerous under-sized, ill-developed English men, and women too, commonly seen.

Sir Arthur Cunynghame, early in 1879, in 'My Command in South Africa,' gave to the public a very correct opinion he had formed of the characteristics and qualities of the Boers. He writes at page 208 :—

"I have often remarked the hardihood of these Boers; and whether for bearing cold, heat, deprivation of food, or for power to continue in the saddle, I look upon them as quite equal to the Cossack of Russia, and very far superior to him in the use of the rifle."

And again, at page 241 :—

"There are no finer young men in the world than the young Dutch Boers, who are generally of immense height and size, and very hardy. Their life is spent in the open air by day, and frequently at night they sleep on the veld with no tent or covering. Men more fit for the Grenadier Guards, as to personal appearance, could not be found."

The writer of the "Boers at Home," in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for December 1881, also vividly portrays the chief outward observable points of the Boers. Among other remarks, he says:—

"Your Boer might pass any day for a small English farmer, perhaps a bit more untidy about the beard, not unlikely evincing a stronger dislike to the wash-tub in more senses than one. The superior class are just substantial gentlemen-farmers, while many of them are strikingly handsome. They are a tall race, six-feet-four being a common stature, and differ from English of the same class only in dress — corduroy suits of hideous shades of brown and yellow being worn almost without exception."

Indications of coming storm.

An ominous but disregarded sign was early given of the unfavourable disposition entertained towards us, by the absence of support, co-operation, or even sympathy from the Boers, during the progress of the Zulu and Sekukuni campaigns, 1878-79, notwithstanding that these hostilities may be said to have been in their cause, and advantageous in breaking down the power of native chiefs, who had already occasioned them great troubles and losses. The few followers, under the brave Piet Uys—who were so uselessly sacrificed at the sad affair of Inhloblane[1]—were, notwithstanding the inducements then held out to the Boers to join us, the only party which came forward in the Zulu war; and, later on, not a Boer was present at the taking of Sekukuni's stronghold.

[1] See note, p. 3.

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Armed mass meetings

The successive mass meetings, attended by upwards of 6000 men, who took their arms with them, were, however, sufficient testimony to the disaffected state of feeling throughout the country, and showed the alarming extent of readiness for insurrection. For some time before the rising, fears had been expressed here and there that the Boers, through having lost all hope of the rendition of their country, or of obtaining self-government by means of remonstrances addressed to the imperial authorities, had grown more determined to take active steps, and really intended open resistance.[1] Even the women were said to be urging

Boer women urging on the men.

[1] Sir Garnet Wolseley, in his despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 29th October 1879, shows how great were his apprehensions on this head, even at that early date :—

"I am compelled to recognise the continuance of grave discontent. I am informed on all sides that it is the intention of the Boers to fight for independence. . . . There is no doubt, I think, that the people are incited to discontent and rebellion by ambitious agitators ; but I am compelled also to allow that the timid and wavering, who are awed into taking side against us, are comparatively a small party, and that the main body of the Dutch population are disaffected to our rule."

This accurate estimate of the state of disaffection prevailing throughout the country, and danger of insurrection, was, however, most materially modified, six months later. Sir Garnet—being then about to quit South Africa—wrote, on the 10th April 1880 :—

"Reports from all parts of the Transvaal sustain the opinion that the people, being thoroughly weary of the uncertainty and the troubles attendant upon opposition to the Government, and seeing no hope of any successful issue from the dangerous measures in which they have been induced to place confidence, have determined to renounce all further disturbing action, and to return to the peaceful cares of their rural life, which was already beginning to suffer from the continuance of political irritation.

"The resolution of a part of the people to deny the trade of their produce to Englishmen failed utterly, and expired with conspicuous lack of vitality before the natural forces that were fated to overpower it.

"Taxes are being paid, and the revenue of the country, so long

on the crisis, the young ones rendering their sweethearts savage by continually taunting them, saying: "You talk a great deal always of what you will do, but it invariably ends in your doing nothing!"

Determination of the Boers to act early expressed.

An officer who had been moving through the country the previous June, on a tour of inspection, related how much he had been impressed by the emphatic warning uttered by a highly intelligent Irish yeoman, at whose house he stayed a night. This farmer had remarked to the effect that, owing to the Boers regarding persons of his nationality as, like themselves, disaffected to British rule, they were less guarded and gave expression to their real opinions and intentions with greater freedom before him than they would in the presence of an Englishman; and that, from what had come to his knowledge at private meetings of the Boers and otherwise, he felt convinced that they were fully resolved to proceed to extreme measures, and, if necessary, fight to get back their country.

Warnings were not missing.

In fact, indications and warnings of the threatening storm were certainly not missing to those who chose to look for them, and wished to shape their course accordingly.

Mr Aylward, writing towards the close of 1878, in

disturbed, and in part suspended, is flowing in steadily in its natural course.

"I believe that, with the check which has thus been imposed upon the organisation of discontent, a foundation has been laid for the administration of affairs in the Transvaal, upon which there may be built, with the aid of time, a fabric of Government in furtherance of the prosperity of the people, and in unison with their sympathies and their wishes."

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his 'Transvaal of To-day,' spoke with prophetic warning in his final words :—

"The Transvaal question will soon become the question of the day, and is likely to absorb quite as much attention as the Abyssinian war did in its time; and I have not the least doubt that, if not speedily looked to, it will cost as much in money. A great war of races is being provoked at the present moment. I doubt if this work will be in the hands of the public before it shall have commenced.

"In this and in all future native wars the English in Africa must fight alone. In former cases, the Boers have refused to aid the Government against native tribes, and this for a most excellent reason. British wars are undertaken to protect one tribe against another. Natives will squabble. The last war in the colony was in favour of the Fingoes; whilst the monstrous waste of public money now going on in the Transvaal is incurred because, forsooth, Captain Clarke must protect Pogwani and Logwani—insignificant robbers,—against Legolani and Secocoeni—greater robbers. Burghers will not join in any hostilities undertaken on account of natives. Why did not Captain Clarke order the paltry tribe of Pogwani to go into some inside location if they so badly wanted protection? During the sovereignty[1] a similar thing occurred; and Noble, in his history, remarks :—

"'The Resident now found himself committed to extensive operations against Moshesh's tribe, which numbered at the least 10,000 fighting men, whilst he had no adequate force to oppose against them. The burghers refused to muster for such service. They could not comprehend or appreciate the motives which induced the Government of so powerful a nation as Great Britain to call out farmers from their homes and lawful employments on the occurrence of these chronic squabbles among the natives. Military duty under such circumstances was extremely distasteful and harassing to them, especially as, in addition to their own personal hard-

[1] Now the Orange Free State.

ships and risks in the field, their families and property were exposed to be plundered and ruined by the tribes against whom they acted. Many of the farmers had already in this manner suffered severe losses of their flocks.'

"To all these causes for not fighting in quarrels not their own, is now added the vexation they must feel at having been deprived of their liberties. And if they will not fight, neither will they pay. It is yet to be seen if any attempt to tax them for wars undertaken by a foreign governor, and without their own consent, will be resisted.

"The English people will find out, sooner or later, that they must begin to keep a firmer hand on colonial governors. Up to the present, in Africa their action has produced little save heart-burnings, mischief, and expense. Their Kafir policy has ever been, and still is, a costly failure; and their schemes for the extension of the empire in South Africa are tending hourly to put England to the cost of keeping down one, if not several, insurgent populations.

"But Sir Theophilus Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal is, of all, the most disastrous experiment yet undertaken. It has cost one Kafir war, and will cost another. It has injured the natives, irritated the Boers, and thrown the whole country into a state of anarchy." [1]

But although a dangerous, dogged resolution, displaying the common tenacity, or famous fault of the Dutch, had no doubt been previously formed by the majority of the Boers—in some way, by force all others failing, to obtain redress of their grievances—it may yet be reasonably doubted if there would ever have been occasion for them to have resorted to open hostilities, had not the Bezuidenhout incident,—an attempt to levy taxes which were, in amount, if not illegal, certainly inequitable,—been most unnecessarily

But for the Bezuidenhout affair, hostilities might have been avoided.

[1] See also Appendix A*.

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forced into prominence by the maladroit action of the local government, who thus suddenly fanned into a flame the smouldering discontent of the country, and so infuriated the people that not only did they rise *en masse*, but, worst of all, escaped from the ordinary control of their leaders, who were even threatened with death if they did not head the movement, and assist the former in obtaining by arms what they conceived to be their rights.[1]

There had been no intention on the part of the disaffected Boers to take any active steps in that direction until the assembly of the people, which had been called for the 8th January 1881. The attempted arrest of Bezuidenhout by a body of constables specially raised for the purpose — there being no police forthcoming in the Transvaal for such duty —followed by the despatch of a military force to Potchefstroom in November,—in the belief that its presence would alone suffice to exercise such a moral restraint as would cause the arbitrary decisions of the Government to be respected,—occasioned the immediate assembly of several hundred armed men to guard Bezuidenhout from arrest, and the advancement of the date originally fixed for the mass meeting by a month. Had nothing occurred to have obliged the leaders to call an earlier meeting, the Boers would have assembled on the 8th January in a much less excitable spirit, more amenable to control, and, as before, disposed to leave the direction of their cause in the hands of their leading men. Some kind of

[1] See Appendix A.

ultimatum would have been drawn up, and presented by the latter; but time would have been afforded for its consideration, and the reply to be made. There would have been no hurried act on either side. The telegraph would not have been destroyed. The Administrator would have been able to have consulted with and been guided by the High Commissioner, who, again, would have asked for the views and decision of the Imperial Government, before any summary action was taken. The attitude of the leaders and people would meanwhile have been such as to offer some reasonable prospect for peaceful negotiations, and opportunities for mutual concession or compromise. Such, it may fairly be believed, were the hopes and designs of the Boer leaders, who hitherto, up to the Bezuidenhout affair, had been sufficiently influential with the people to prevent their committing themselves to actual collision and bloodshed. The minutes given by Mr Hudson, Transvaal Colonial Secretary, of his interview, at the close of November, with Mr Kruger and others, serve to show this.[1]

Debate in the Legislative Assembly.

On the same day that Mr Hudson had his interview with Mr Kruger, the Legislative Assembly —a body consisting of fifteen members, of which six were *ex officio* and nine Crown nominees — were debating at Pretoria on "the existing form of government," *apropos* to Mr C. K. White moving a resolution, of which he had given previous notice:

[1] See Appendix A.

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"1. That the Government of this province, as at present constituted, has failed to secure the confidence or the support of its inhabitants. 2. That a representative form of government is desirable, and has become necessary, to ensure the re-establishment of confidence and to secure the support of the inhabitants of the Transvaal." Mr White made an incisive speech, forcibly dilating upon the dangerous condition of the country, and insisting upon the urgency for granting the representative institutions promised at the time of the annexation — three years and eight months before. Although Mr White stood alone in the House in pressing for this immediate change in the form of government, there is little doubt that the feelings of the larger section of the English-speaking population of the Transvaal were up to this period with him in respect to his motion.[1]

Imprudent reduction of military force.

From the moment the act of annexation was declared irrevocable, and it was determined that the time had not arrived when a representative constitution could be safely granted, it should have been apparent that we could only rule the Transvaal by force, and that consequently a sufficient number of British troops to ensure the stability of the Government was absolutely essential. As has been shown, from whatever side the general situation of the province in 1880 is viewed, everything pointed to this conclusion.

After the capture of Sekukuni's stronghold, and

[1] See Appendix B.

until the apprehended danger was past which was feared from the national mass meeting—called for the 6th April, but postponed owing to the anticipated change of Ministry in England, and expected rendition of the country through Mr Gladstone's advent to power — a considerable body of troops remained detached over the province or massed at Pretoria. Then the forces were reduced, Sir Garnet Wolseley leaving for Natal, and soon after for England.

Military force in the Transvaal, May 1880.

The troops left in the Transvaal at this period numbered about 3600, consisting of one cavalry regiment, three battalions of infantry, part of a battery of field artillery, one company of engineers, and detachments of the commissariat, transport, ordnance, and hospital corps; in fact, a complete little force of all arms, under the command of Major-General the Hon. H. Clifford until the middle of May, when that officer was relieved by Colonel W. Bellairs.

The troops being scattered, no longer formidable.

This force, had it been kept together, or only detached within supporting distances, would have been formidable, but through being broken up and widely scattered, it lost much of its power. As it may be gathered from opinions expressed at other times by Sir Garnet Wolseley, that that general was very averse to, and recognised the imprudence of thus breaking up a regular military force, it can only be inferred that the wishes of the Administrator in that arrangement were deferred to then, as unfortunately they were said to have been later on by Sir George Colley, when he visited the

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Transvaal in August, Sir George having replaced Sir Garnet Wolseley as High Commissioner, Governor, and General Commanding for Natal and the Transvaal.[1]

Early remonstrances from the officer commanding.

It is well known that Colonel Bellairs, from the time he arrived in the country, had unceasingly drawn attention to the faulty disposition of the troops, and, while strongly deprecating any reduction, particularly in cavalry and transport services, had pressed for greater concentration; but his well-founded apprehensions were not believed in, owing, it must be supposed, to the nature of the reports which continued to be received at this period by the Imperial Government and Sir George Colley, from the Administrator. It is true that three of the detached military posts—those of Heidelberg, Middleburg, and Lulu Mountains—were given up in August and September; but, as a considerable reduction of the troops—nearly one-half the total strength, one cavalry regiment, one infantry battalion, and a large portion of the transport and branch services—was effected at about the same time, the detached positions,—Standerton, Wakkerstroom, Lydenburg, Marabastadt, and Rustenburg,—which were retained, thus became even more isolated and difficult to communicate with than previously.

[1] Colonel Sir G. Pomeroy-Colley, when selected for this civil and military appointment, stood about 245th on the list of colonels. In order to give him supreme military command—Colonel Bellairs being much senior in date of commission—it became necessary to give him temporary higher rank. He was accordingly made Local Major-General.

The time selected to effect this reduction of the troops was specially ill chosen—just after the Cape Parliament had rejected the Conference proposals;[1] and when the Boer leaders had returned, strengthened by the sympathy they had met with from their fellow-countrymen and well-wishers at the Cape.

Time for reduction ill chosen.

The situation, in regard to the malcontents, had in no way altered for the better. If there had been no fresh mass meetings or demonstrations in the country, the explanation was simple: it was the cold dry season, when, as customary, it was necessary for the farmers to remain in the distant bushveld, where their cattle could obtain good grazing, and greater warmth and protection than on the highveld. That quiet season over, they, in ordinary course, would return to their homesteads, and, as arranged, assemble at the January meeting, when they might be expected to become as troublesome or more so than before.

The dangerous situation remained the same.

Neither, on our side, had there been any departure from the high-handed system of government in vogue, or effort made to conciliate the leaders and people, which could at all warrant running the risk of having to encounter insurrection with insufficient means to overcome it. It would surely have been prudent—as at the time was forcibly urged by Colonel Bellairs—to have delayed the consideration of reduction until after the January meeting, and the intentions of the leaders had been better ascertained. As it was, the action partook something of the nature of a gambler's

No change in system of government.

[1] See *ante*, p. 5.

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stake on chance—to effect an economy of a few thousands.

Economy sought for in wrong direction.

Economy was sought for in the wrong direction. It would have been better and safely gained by concentrating, instead of unwisely reducing, and yet not then concentrating the remaining troops. The out-stations, being at long distances from headquarters, cost enormously; largely increased commissariat, transport, ordnance, and medical services were necessary; great loss was incurred of stores in transit and on the spot from deterioration, want of cover, supervision, &c.; and excessive destruction of waggons, animals, and transport equipment took place, as only those who have had experience of the roads or tracks of that country at different seasons can possibly understand. To these items for extra expenditure, generally entailed by such outlying, and, to the soldier, more or less unsatisfactory posts, might be added others—caused by increased sickness, insubordination, and desertion.

The troops healthy but for enteric fever.

But for the occasional appearance of typhoid or enteric fever, the result of drinking water charged with organic matter, generally when on the march, the troops were particularly healthy, as might be expected in such a fine climate as that on the high-veld. Continued observation and careful investigation into the origin of each case had enabled Brigade-Surgeon Skeen, the principal medical officer, to arrive at the conclusion that the fever was wholly due to

germs, taken into the system by drinking impure water. Statistics showed that when the troops remained stationary in places where proper sanitary precautions were taken to ensure no contamination to the water, the fever ceased; and that fresh outbreaks could usually be traced to outside causes—soldiers returning from marches, when the same precautions and control could not be exercised.

Considerable invaliding after Sekukuni war.

For some months after the Sekukuni war, the hospitals were filled with cases which had originated in this way, and considerable invaliding followed—an item of expenditure that is generally forgotten in calculating the cost of a campaign. These men had to be sent down to the coast for embarkation, by an expensive system of ambulances, taking several weeks in transit; and their places had to be filled by drafts of trained men from the depots, who in turn had to be replaced by fresh recruits, raised to meet this extra drain.

Causes of enteric fever in South Africa.

The causes of this evil in South Africa will be more easily understood, when it is explained that the streams met with at the various halting-places on the roads were, more especially in the dry season, liable to organic impurity from the numerous dead oxen lying about. The heavy road traffic,—greatly increased when a campaign is being carried on, or large bodies of troops are occupying the country,—being conducted by means of ox-waggons, moving about thirteen miles a-day, the number of oxen turned adrift to die—sick from some epidemic, or exhausted from bad roads and deficient grass—was

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very large. The poor animals would then generally seek water, and often drop down and die in the streams.

Attempts made to remedy the evils.

The officer commanding the troops endeavoured, with some success, to allay the mischief, by directing transport officers and military parties, when on the move, to draw the dead oxen away from the immediate vicinity of streams, and issued orders for the drinking water to be invariably taken from above streams. But even the vultures, which assembled in such crowds to feed on the carcasses, though useful as scavengers, were suspected of defeating all these precautions, by repairing to the water after they had over-eaten themselves and disgorging into the streams, flowing but sluggishly in dry seasons. A suggestion made by Dr Skeen, that wells—such as used in Eastern countries with weighted pole would answer—should be sunk along the main roads, was considered good, but in advance of the means of the country to carry out successfully.

From the foregoing it may be surmised that, had the troops not been so detached, fewer parties would have been on the march, and fewer casualties would consequently have arisen from sickness.

Discipline suffers from troops being detached.

Discipline invariably deteriorates in some particulars, when troops—like those referred to—have been campaigning for a long period in such a country as South Africa, or when, broken up into fragmentary detachments, they occupy a territory so extensive as the Transvaal, and small armed parties are frequently

marching from station to station, or to the coast, traversing long lonely roads for weeks together under insufficient control. It is not surprising if, in the latter circumstances, many instances of depredation occurred, committed by passing soldiers on inhabitants or farms at wayside places. These acts sometimes seemed to show that the men looked upon themselves as in an enemy's country, where they need not be over particular. In many cases, no doubt, the sufferers did not consider it worth their while to lodge complaints with the Landdrost, who often resided miles away at an inconvenient distance; and besides, the culprits might have, meanwhile, had time to get into another district before any formal identification or arrest could be made. In other cases, the owners having ridden after and obtained restitution of some articles taken, would be satisfied, and decline to take further steps; or compensation having been offered, the affair would be thus compromised.

Checks to arrest crime.

The military authorities, however, while carrying out as many checks as possible upon the conduct of parties proceeding through the country, gave every encouragement and assistance in their power for the detection and punishment of such crime; indeed, with such good effect that, during the month preceding hostilities, there were more than a score of soldiers at one time in prisons undergoing sentences for various civil offences of a bad type—shooting cattle and sheep, and carrying off the carcasses, horse-stealing, breaking into stores, &c.

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Great loss through desertion.

It has sometimes been urged that British troops when stationed in a colony cost no more to the Imperial Government than if at home. This was certainly a fallacious estimate in regard to the Transvaal, where the expenditure in transport, stores, and in other ways was, as shown in the preceding paragraphs,[1] largely in excess. A fertile source of this extra cost, and at the same time weakness, was that arising from the large number of men deserting—only approached during the period we had garrisons stationed throughout Canada—an item of expenditure which, like that on account of invaliding,[2] is very generally forgotten, when making such a comparison or counting up the cost of an army of occupation.

Deserters to Transvaal prior to annexation.

This crime had always been rife among the troops stationed in South Africa, and a large proportion of the deserters had found their way to the Transvaal before our arrival there, many of whom had become thriving citizens. It was not thought expedient to molest these men unless they had recently deserted, and they were accordingly furnished with certificates to protect them from arrest. The Orange Free State has similarly benefited from a like supply of labour, sometimes skilled, from the same source; and the Diamond-fields and other mining districts have plenty of such men.[3]

Anecdote of a deserter to the Orange Free State.

Just prior to the withdrawal of the King's Dragoon Guards, an officer of that corps crossed over into the

[1] See *ante*, pp. 30-32.

[2] See *ante*, pp. 30-32.

[3] Many of the Filibusters now in Bechuanaland are said to be deserters from our forces.

Free State to attend the Harrismith races. Stopping on his way at a smith's—one of his horses having cast a shoe—he recognised the name over the door as one familiar to him, and the man himself coming out, proved to be a deserter of a few weeks before from his own regiment, who had set up a forge, and was driving a very paying trade. The officer's horse was shod, but a heavy price had to be paid for the favour!

Inducements to desert.

With startling evidence occasionally brought before him of the prosperity enjoyed by former deserters, and feeling acutely the contrast between his small army pay, scanty fare, and tent life, and the enormous wages, with plentiful board and lodgings, offered to him if he would desert, it is not to be wondered at that the British soldier should so frequently have been tempted to run all risks to change his lot.

Risks attending desertion.

The risks were certainly great: mounted look-out parties hovering around, and following up a chase for fifty or even a hundred miles, in the hope of gaining the large reward—£5—offered for capture; heavy punishments on conviction; danger of starvation or death from exposure. The bodies of two artillerymen were reported in the papers to have been seen on the veld between Potchefstroom and the Diamondfields: the unfortunate men having evidently succumbed and perished miserably from hunger and cold.

Facilities offered for desertion.

The inducements to desert were, however, too often irresistible, and facilities were frequently afforded to take men beyond the reach of the patrols. A builder was suspected of having placed horses at the disposal of two soldiers, which enabled them to reach a

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village, a hundred miles off, where he was carrying out a contract.

Offer made to two officers.

Two officers, who were out shooting in the country in plain clothes, went to a Boer's house. The man, in the course of conversation, told them that he was willing to give £7, 10s. a-month, with board and lodging, to any person who could keep his books, and do other clerical work for him; and ended by asking if either of them would accept the situation!

Boer women marry deserters.

While mentioning the inducements to desert, we must not omit that the fair young Boer woman sometimes exercised her influence. A look-out officer, as he was termed, in charge of the mounted patrols, had reason to suspect that a deserter was harboured in a certain farmhouse, which he insisted on entering. When the door was opened, only the daughter of the house could be seen; but presently, looking up the chimney, he espied his man. It transpired afterwards that the poor fellow was about to be married to the girl, and had arranged with her father to settle down on the farm.

"An underground railroad."

The Boers generally rendered assistance quietly to men passing by their farms, and endeavouring to escape over the border; and no doubt deserters who had already succeeded in getting clear away, in some cases communicated with their former comrades as to the best line of country to follow. Cavalry men sometimes departed with their chargers; and infantry men, if they could ride, supplied themselves with their officers' or some one else's horses. They frequently, also, took with them their rifles, ammuni-

tion, and blankets, probably disposing of them to the Boers in order to pay their way.

Large cost of desertion.

The men thus lost were all trained soldiers of some standing, by no means always the "black sheep" of their corps, but often of long-tried service and character, who could be ill spared, and only replaced at considerable cost and the lapse of some months.

The expenses attending keeping up mounted look-out parties on the roads, payments for rewards and information, conveyance of deserters, increased prison accommodation, losses of horses, rifles, ammunition, and clothing, &c., formed a heavy item. To this must be added the loss of the services of those deserters retaken—for from one to two years' detention in prison after conviction, and period of absence before—and the cost of replacing those who were never recovered. Altogether, £200 for every man raised, trained, and sent to such a distant part—five weeks' march into the interior after disembarking—to fill each vacancy created by desertion, would not be an overestimate.

Numerous cases of desertion occurred at the commencement of the year 1880, after the close of the Sekukuni war; then the number lessened, until the warmer months coming round again, admitting of less exposure in crossing over the high open plains, the cases again rapidly increased. They rose to the highest number during the month of August, when, out of a force then about 3000 men, 70 went off, of whom perhaps one-third were subsequently recovered.

We have not before us precise statistics, but, never-

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theless, sufficient data to enable us to form a belief that we shall be under the mark when we compute the loss by desertion in 1880 to have been 260 men, representing, at the foregoing estimate, a money loss of no less than £52,000.

Discomfort of soldier's life in Transvaal.

The troops left in the Transvaal had been subjected to much hard work and exposure the previous year, in the Zulu and Sekukuni campaigns; some had even been engaged in the Galeka and Gaeka war of 1877-78. Their lot had not been cast in pleasant, lively garrisons, surrounded by comforts, amusements, and civilising influences; but then, at least, they had a certain degree of the excitement and occupation incidental to campaigning life, which was missing when quartered in the Transvaal, until the close of 1880. Although their officers did as much as lay in their power to create a few amusements for them, still the soldiers found their existence at the out-stations monotonous and dreary in the extreme. Some took the matter into their own hands and deserted, while the rest anxiously anticipated the order to move down country to the coast.

Tent life is, with fine weather, and other surroundings being propitious, an agreeable novelty for a short time, or even longer, with some definite object in view; but when it comes to spending years, in all seasons, under canvas, the feelings are apt to alter and take a different view, especially if other circumstances contribute to render it distasteful. Now the soldier was under-fed for such a life as he was

Soldiers were under-fed.

leading, on an elevated plateau several thousand feet above the sea. The field-ration he had enjoyed during the campaigns was reduced to the ordinary ration given to soldiers in quarters. The 1 lb. meat, including bone, did not, during the dry season in the Transvaal, when, for want of good grass, the cattle became exceedingly poor, afford the same nourishment as a similar quantity elsewhere, while the amount of bone was proportionately greater. It was difficult for the soldier, with his small means, to purchase extra articles, as customary, to supplement his messing. Eggs, butter, and milk could not generally be obtained, and, if forthcoming, sold at extravagant prices.

Their dislike to biscuits and tinned meats.

With a view to reducing the surplus stores accumulated for past campaigning purposes, an order was received to issue preserved meat and biscuit twice a-week. As may be imagined, this order ran counter to the prevalent prejudice entertained by our lower classes to tinned meats.

Anecdote of another deserter.

A deserter left a letter on his bed containing the following words: "Private ——'s kit is complete. i am going to see if i can get a little better dinner somewhere else than i got here to-day—old Bully meat!"

Danger resulting from withdrawal of cavalry.

In order to cope effectively with the possible rising of a mounted population like the Boers—hunters from their childhood, and consequently practised horsemen and excellent shots at long distances, combined with thorough knowledge of country—it

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A mounted force essential to cope with Boers.

was obviously essential that a sufficient mounted force should remain at hand ready to meet such an emergency. Only so could the communications be kept up, assistance rendered to the well-disposed, or protection afforded beyond the immediate vicinity of infantry posts; and only so could support and adequate security be given to infantry or artillery on the march. A body of infantry, moving with guns and supplies, would otherwise be always liable to be taken at a disadvantage by such a foe, wherever rocks or other cover were forthcoming, offering facilities for attack or disputing the way,—and certainly such spots were easily met with along all the roads—spots which could not always be avoided by a column obliged to carry its supplies with it. By the enemy hanging on the flanks and rear, as well as impeding the advance in front, the artillery horses and transport animals would soon be destroyed, and the guns and supplies imperilled.

The reason why the cavalry were withdrawn.

Such being the case—which should have been as clear before the outbreak as it was after,—why was it that the King's Dragoon Guards, the only cavalry regiment—not alone in the Transvaal, but in South Africa—was withdrawn? Why was all proper caution set aside, when an element of risk still remained, and a game of chance instead played,[1] all being staked on the settled but erroneous conviction entertained by some officials, that the Boers were wanting in pluck, and would not therefore become dangerous.[2]

[1] See *ante*, p. 29.

[2] See *ante*, pp. 14-17.

The Imperial Government would certainly not have sanctioned such a risky reduction, but that they had been led astray, through receiving what they deemed reliable reports, satisfying them that all danger was past, and no further fear need be entertained of insurrection.

Effect of departure of King's Dragoon Guards.

By October the regiment was on its way to India. Its departure—announced far and wide by advertisements of the sale of its horses, &c.,—could not have failed to attract great attention, and have deeply influenced the disaffected Boers in all their subsequent movements and decisions.

A mounted troop of the Transport Service Corps followed, but, together with a detachment of the King's Dragoon Guards, were detained in Natal, awaiting transport to proceed to their depots in England, when, hostilities breaking out, they were immediately remounted, at some trouble and expense, and utilised by Sir George Colley at Laing's Nek, in the January following.

Mounted infantry.

The only remaining mounted military force left in the Transvaal consisted of about one hundred men, taken from the two infantry battalions. This body was used, partly to furnish escorts to Government officials engaged in visiting or collecting taxes in the native districts, and partly in look-out parties to check desertion. A proposal made by Colonel Bellairs, on the removal of the King's Dragoon Guards, to largely increase the number of mounted infantry, profiting by the horses and saddlery of the departing regiment for that purpose, was not entertained, the

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political outlook being considered such as not to warrant such an expenditure.

Inopportune moment chosen to offer assistance to Cape Government.

As if to show yet further how little apprehensive they were of any disturbance taking place, the local government took this inopportune time,—the close of October—soon after the loss of the cavalry regiment, with a reduction of the total military force by nearly one-half,—to offer assistance to the Cape Government — then prosecuting a war against the Basutos — by raising and equipping, in Pretoria, a mounted volunteer corps of 300 men, under Commandant Ferriera, C.M.G., a volunteer officer who had greatly distinguished himself in previous border warfare. As the Government had no ordnance stores available for this purpose, the consent of Sir George Colley was obtained for the required rifles, &c., to be supplied from the military store.[1] Two field-guns were also issued from the local government stores.

Three hundred armed men thus drawn away.

Thus, 300 more armed men—of the material best adapted to act as a mounted levy in the coming struggle—together with an experienced commander, whose knowledge of the country and people would have proved most valuable, were lost; drawn away to take part in a native war with which the province

[1] The rifles intended to replace those supplied to Ferriera's Horse—urgently demanded by the officer commanding the troops in the Transvaal in October—were, apparently, only sent from Pietermaritzburg in the early part of December. The delay was fatal, and they failed to reach their destination. See paragraph 4 of Sir George Colley's letter to Sir Owen Lanyon, in Blue-book [c.—2783], February 1881. Enclosure 3 to No. 14.

had no concern whatever, and from the results of which it had nothing to fear.

Military force in Transvaal, November 1880.

When November arrived — prior to the development of the Bezuidenhout affair—the military forces were thus spread over the country, viz. :—

Pretoria (199 miles from Newcastle).—Headquarters and five companies of 2d battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers; mounted troop of do.; four guns, N battery, 5th brigade, Royal Artillery; one company Royal Engineers.

Rustenbury (67 miles from Pretoria).—Two companies of 2d battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers.

Marabastadt (165 miles from Pretoria).—Two companies of 94th Regiment.

Lydenbery (188 miles from Pretoria).—Headquarters and two companies of 94th Regiment.

Wakkerstroom (162 miles from Pretoria; 33 miles from Newcastle).—One company of 94th Regiment; mounted troop of do.

Standerton (114 miles from Pretoria; 85 miles from Newcastle).—One company of 94th Regiment.

Force in Natal.

In Natal there were two infantry battalions—the 58th Regiment, recently withdrawn from the Transvaal, and the 3d battalion 60th Rifles—two guns, Royal Artillery, one company Royal Engineers, and one company of the 94th Regiment, the last being stationed at Newcastle, the nearest military post to the Transvaal border.

Insufficient transport for mobilisation.

The transport service in the Transvaal having been reduced,[1] there were no longer the same means for mobilising the whole of the troops as previously.

[1] See *ante*, pp. 26-28.

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Transport was only kept up for mobilising a small column at Pretoria, one company at Rustenburg, and one company at Marabastadt. The remaining outlying garrisons were now regarded as stationary posts.

False impression entertained by Government of moral effect of detached posts.

The strange belief entertained by the governing powers would appear to have been, that the presence of a British detachment, however small, — even of infantry alone — though surrounded by an armed mounted population,—should suffice to overawe and control the district in which it was placed—no matter how distant from support—and so prevent any thought of insurrection.

Detached posts in Kafir wars.

In the Kafir wars of 1851-53, and 1877-78, small infantry posts, separated by only a short march, were usefully employed, and suited to the character of the operations necessary to subdue the enemy; but here, in the Transvaal, were isolated, weak infantry detachments, from 70 to 200 miles apart, without cavalry support or transport, in the midst of an armed disaffected white people, and in a country where the rivers and streams, at certain seasons, become impassable for days or even weeks together. Was it supposed that, because such posts might serve to keep in check a native population, they would equally answer the same purpose with the Boers? It would seem so.

Altered conditions require changes in tactics.

Each war that we have undertaken of late years in South Africa has necessitated complete change in tactics and mode of operations, to meet the altered circumstances which arose in each case. The same has happened in New Zealand and Indian campaigns.

No army but that of England has had so frequently to adapt itself to sudden change—to re-educate itself—at short notice, for the ever-varying localities of hostilities.

The Kafir war of 1877-78, on the Cape eastern frontier, partook mainly of the character of bush-fighting—the natives taking to the dense bush and forests, and having to be driven out by skirmishing parties. Then followed the Zulu war, when we became the defending, the natives the assailing party—we in square or laager formations, awaiting the enemy's onslaught. In the Sekukuni operations, this latter method was reversed, we having to attack the natives, hidden behind their strong rocky fastnesses.

The Boer hostilities introduced a different element from our previous experiences in warfare—an enemy wholly mounted, with the hunter's training and eye for cover and distance. As shown,[1] we neglected to provide an adequate mounted force to meet this new contingency, with the result that the detached garrisons in the Transvaal were reduced to act chiefly on the defensive; while the general officer on the Natal border, not having the patience to await his cavalry reinforcements, then on their way from England and India, suffered defeat for the want of them.

The Bezuidenhout affair.

It was during the early part of the month of November that the proceedings taken by the Government in the Bezuidenhout affair—which had been going on for some weeks—culminated in a crisis and

[1] See *ante*, pp. 39-41.

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rising of the people. As we have already remarked,[1] the case arose out of an attempt to enforce the payment of taxes which were, in amount, if not illegal, certainly inequitable. The case was, however, but the last of many previous wrongful attempts at official exaction.

In the account which Mr Hudson, the Colonial Secretary, gives of his interview with Mr Kruger and the Boer Committee—which took place at Kaulfontein, near Potchefstroom, on the 29th November, —an account, given in the Appendix, which we especially recommend to the notice of our readers,—Mr Cronjé, who subsequently commanded the Boers at the siege of Potchefstroom, is mentioned as expressing his desire to state "all the circumstances which have led to the present difficulties," and as proceeding as follows:—

"Mr Bezuidenhout was served with a tax notice to pay £27, 5s. He appeared at the office of the Landdrost of Potchefstroom, and told him he was willing to pay £14, which was all that could legally be demanded. The Landdrost refused to receive it, but said Bezuidenhout must pay £27, 5s.; but he declined to do so. He was then summoned for £27, 5s., and appeared, presenting his last receipts, and tendered again £14. The Landdrost answered as before. Bezuidenhout flatly refused to pay. Subsequently judgment was given for £14, with £8 costs, and the waggon was attached for the £14. If this matter is looked into, it will be seen how illegally the Government has acted."

No dates are given in the foregoing summary of particulars, but we believe we are correct in stating

[1] See *ante*, pp. 23-25.

that, in the considerable intervals which elapsed between the several times that the case came before the Landdrost, Mr Goetz was in correspondence with and throughout acted under the instructions sent to him from headquarters. There would appear to have been no hasty or inconsiderate action on his part, all responsibility for his decisions and action resting on the Government. To make Mr Cronjé's statement still clearer, it should further be mentioned that Mr Bezuidenhout was possessed of certain half or portions of farms, which were assessed at the full or same rate of tax as levied on full farms,—reckoned at 6000 acres each. The law—probably through an omission, or because the division of farms was not at the moment foreseen—only specified one rate for farms, meaning the recognised farms of 6000 acres each. For half farms, at half rates only, Mr Bezuidenhout's tender of £14 in payment of all taxes due by him was correct, and should have been accepted.

From the fact of the Landdrost having finally revised his decision, and given judgment for £14, it would seem that the Government had tardily recognised their error to that extent. But, not satisfied with having put Mr Bezuidenhout to great unnecessary trouble, as well as expense, in employing an attorney to resist a wrongful claim, he was mulcted in costs—for proving that he was right.[1]

As Mr Bezuidenhout refused payment, a waggon belonging to him was attached in execution, and

[1] See Appendix A.

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steps taken to sell the same in front of the Landdrost's office at Potchefstroom on the 11th November. The sale was interrupted by an assembly of about one hundred Boers, who forcibly took the waggon away.[1]

The Landdrost having reported this interference with his authority, the Administrator considered that serious notice should be taken of the act, and that the occasion demanded that prompt measures should be adopted to support the civil authority. He accordingly requested the officer in command of the troops to despatch a military force at once to Potchefstroom, and, at the same time, sent Captain Raaf, C.M.G., to enrol special constables, and assist the Landdrost in carrying out the process of his Court, and causing his judgments to be respected.

Troops sent to Potchefstroom.

The detachment of troops—consisting of one company of the 2d Battalion 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers, half the mounted troop of the same corps, and two 9-pounder guns of the Royal Artillery—under the command of Major Thornhill, R.A., left Pretoria on the 14th November, and reached Potchefstroom a few days later, being there joined by another company of the 2d Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers, sent direct

[1] In his letter of the 14th November, calling upon Colonel Bellairs to despatch troops to Potchefstroom in aid of the civil power, Sir Owen Lanyon gives a different version of the cause of Bezuidenhout's non-payment of taxes. He says—"This waggon had been taken under authority of the Court for non-payment of taxes, Bezuidenhout having refused to pay the same, not because he was unable to do so, but on the grounds that he would not recognise her Majesty's Government." No mention is made of the real facts of the case. See Blue-book (c.—2740), page 110.

from Rustenburg.[1] This force was equipped as a flying column, in readiness for any emergency; and although the Government did not anticipate that its services would be more than temporarily required, Colonel Bellairs took the precaution to desire the officer in command to intrench himself outside the town, and form a similar defensible position to those occupied at the permanent out-stations; while large supplies of ammunition and commissariat stores were forwarded, in addition to those—fourteen days' rations —required for a field column.

Mr Hudson's report.

Shortly after, finding that the position grew more serious; that Captain Raaf, even with his body of special constables, was unequal to arrest defaulters protected by over three hundred armed men; and that

[1] Extract from the 'Siege of Potchefstroom,' by Lieutenant H. M. L. Rundle, R.A.: "On Saturday, 13th November 1880, it was rumoured in the camp at Pretoria that a riot had taken place at Potchefstroom, the old capital of the Transvaal. Three hundred Boers had ridden into the town and forcibly taken away a waggon, which was being sold by order of the Landdrost for arrears of taxes. It was known by 5 P.M. that, at the request of the Government, a small force was under orders to march on the following day at one o'clock for Potchefstroom. The troops at this time stationed at Pretoria were: headquarters and four guns N/5, R.A.; headquarters 2d Company R.E., strength about 45; headquarters 2/21st Royal Scots Fusiliers, strength about 350; one troop of mounted infantry, strength about 35; a few men of the Army Service and Army Hospital Corps. Out of this force the following were formed into a 'Field Force,' under the command of Major C. Thornhill, R.A., and marched for Potchefstroom in less than 24 hours from the time the orders were received—viz., two guns, N/5, R.A.; 25 mounted infantry; one company Royal Scots Fusiliers—strength, 75. This force marched into Potchefstroom at 2 P.M. on the 18th, having thus done the 104 miles in 96 hours. On the 20th the force was further strengthened by the arrival of another company of the Royal Scots Fusiliers from Rustenburg, under the command of Lieutenant R. A. Browne—strength, 49 N.C.O.'s and men."

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Mr Goetz, the Landdrost, was desirous of being relieved—he wishing to avoid the responsibility of a collision with the Boers, which he was of opinion would cause a general rising,[1]—the Administrator deemed it necessary to send the Colonial Secretary to take temporary civil charge at Potchefstroom until the arrival of Major Clarke, Special Commissioner for the Northern Districts, on the 30th November.

If reference is again made to Mr Hudson's report of his meeting with the Boer leaders, it will be observed that the Colonial Secretary is mentioned as replying to Mr Cronjé's statement of Mr Bezuidenhout's case: "The Government is not aware of the case as you have stated it," meaning, we presume, that he personally had been left in ignorance of the particulars as then given. That the progress of the question at issue, when it was under consideration at headquarters, should have been apparently withheld from the Colonial Secretary, is sufficiently singular; but that Mr Hudson should have been sent to Potchefstroom without a correct knowledge of all the details concerning the matter which, it is to be supposed, he was to endeavour to arrange, seems most extraor-

[1] In his report of the 22d November, Mr Goetz thus writes:—

"2. Judging from Captain Raaf's report and the character of the Boers, whom I have known for many years, I am of opinion that if a collision with them should take place, the matter will not end here, but a general rising may be expected.

"3. Under the present state of affairs—as I have taken all the steps in my power, and as I have failed to enforce obedience to the law—I would earnestly suggest to the Government to send or appoint some one here, with full power to act should military force be used, as I cannot take the responsibility of the result of such an important matter."—See Blue-book (c.—2740), page 123.

dinary. He was evidently greatly impressed with the statement of facts given him by Mr Cronjé, as well as the proceedings on the case supplied to him by the Landdrost, and winds up his report with the following significant words: "The political results which would appear to have arisen out of this case require, I think, that Government should investigate it." We are not told that any such inquiry as that recommended by Mr Hudson would be or was made; neither are the Landdrost's proceedings in the case enclosed with Sir Owen Lanyon's covering despatch.

Military force in Pretoria inadequate to form a field column.

On the 16th November, Colonel Bellairs is found representing to the Administrator that, consequent on the departure of the troops for Potchefstroom, the force left in Pretoria was inadequate "to send out a strong field column should any pressing emergency arise to require it;" and recommending the withdrawal of the troops from Marabastadt (two companies of the 94th Regiment) and Rustenburg (one company of the 2d Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers), as he was of opinion that having at disposal a stronger body of troops at Pretoria was of greater importance than maintaining those military outposts.[1] Sir Owen

[1] From Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the Administrator, Transvaal.

"PRETORIA, *November* 16, 1880.

"Consequent on the recent despatch of troops to Potchefstroom, and this garrison having been thus materially reduced, I shall no longer be able, unless reinforced, to send out a strong field column from this station, should any pressing emergency arise to require it.

"At this moment, leaving, say, 150 infantry for the protection of Pretoria, there would remain available for field purposes only two guns,

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Lanyon, however, in his reply of the following date,[1] demurred to the removal of the troops from these stations, but remarked that "there would be no objection to a temporary withdrawal of some of the troops from Lydenburg."[2] No immediate action

Royal Artillery, part of a company of Royal Engineers, a few mounted men, and about 240 infantry.

"In the present condition of this province there should be a sufficient force maintained at Pretoria to render it possible to detail a field column consisting of at least four guns, a company of Royal Engineers, a troop of mounted infantry, and 500 infantry—or about 700 men.

"Under these circumstances I have the honour to recommend the withdrawal of the troops now stationed at Marabastadt (two companies 94th Foot) and Rustenburg (one company 2d Battalion 21st Foot) to Pretoria, as I am of opinion that having at disposal a stronger body of troops at Pretoria is of greater importance than maintaining the military outposts referred to."

[1] From the Administrator, Transvaal, to the Colonel Commanding, Transvaal.

"PRETORIA, *November* 17, 1880.

"In reply to your letter of yesterday's date, I have the honour to state that it would be better to reduce the garrison at Lydenburg than to withdraw either of the detachments at Rustenburg or Marabastadt. The former place is one of the centres of disaffection amongst the Boers, and the moral effect of having troops there has already been productive of good.

"2. The force at Marabastadt, on the other hand, exercises considerable influence over the natives, who are most numerous in that district; and I am informed by the Secretary for Native Affairs that already the late action of the Cape Government in Basutoland has, to a certain extent, caused a feeling of uneasiness amongst them. This feeling is, I fear, being fostered by a certain section of the Boers.

"3. There would be no objection, however, to a temporary withdrawal of some of the troops from Lydenburg, but I think such should only be done to meet the present necessity to which you refer."

[2] From the Administrator, Transvaal, to the Colonel Commanding, Transvaal.

"ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE, TRANSVAAL, *November* 23, 1880.

"In view of the present state of affairs in the Transvaal, and the mass meeting about to be held by the Boers in January next in the vicinity

being pressed, the question was then referred for the decision of Sir George Colley.[1]

Troops ordered in from Marabastadt and Lydenburg.

In a few days the Administrator seems to have become more alive to the desirability of assembling a larger force at Pretoria. On the 23d November he writes, asking Colonel Bellairs to bring in one of the companies from Marabastadt, and the headquarters of the 94th Regiment from Lydenburg; also to concentrate the mounted infantry. In ordinary course, the Major-General's authority would have been applied for before ordering these moves to be carried out;

of Pretoria, I think it is desirable that as many troops as possible should be concentrated at Pretoria.

"I should therefore be obliged if you would take the necessary steps to accomplish this object, by bringing in one company from Marabastadt, and the headquarters of the 94th Regiment from Lydenburg, leaving such men as you may think necessary for the protection of the military stores and the town.

"*P.S.*—It would also be well to concentrate as many of the mounted infantry here as possible."

[1] From Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Pietermaritzburg.

"PRETORIA, *November* 18, 1880.

"1. This correspondence, pointing to the urgent necessity for greater concentration or reinforcements for the garrison of Pretoria, is transmitted for the information of the Major-General Commanding, and for such instructions as he may be pleased to give on the subject.

"2. His Excellency Sir Owen Lanyon suggests the temporary withdrawal of a portion of the troops from Lydenburg; but the removal of one of the two companies 94th Foot from that station would not, in my opinion, suffice or fully meet the object in view—viz., that the garrison of Pretoria should be of such strength as to admit of sending out a field column of four guns, a company Royal Engineers, a troop of mounted infantry, and 500 infantry, whenever serious emergency called for it.

"3. Should Sir George Colley decide on withdrawing a company from Lydenburg, will you kindly, to save postal delay, telegraph to that effect? There is only a weekly mail (Tuesdays) to Lydenburg, and with ox-transport the company would be twelve or more days on the road at this season."

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but the telegraph to Natal that day being defective, and Colonel Bellairs viewing the matter as urgent, the necessary orders were at once despatched.

To this end, native runners were procured and sent off to Marabastadt, carrying instructions that, in addition to one company of the 94th Regiment, a detachment of the mounted troop of that corps—which had been escorting the Secretary for Native Affairs, collecting hut taxes, for the previous five months—should be sent in. The other detachments of the troop, at Newcastle, Wakkerstroom, and Standerton, were ordered, by telegraph, to meet at the last station, and thence march to Pretoria. The orders for Lydenburg were conveyed by a mounted sergeant of the Transport Corps, with a led horse, the weekly post-cart having already left that morning. Headquarters and two companies of the 94th Regiment were to come in, less about 50 men, to remain in charge of the camp and stores.[1]

[1] From Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Pietermaritzburg.

"PRETORIA, *November* 25, 1880.

"1. After consultation with the Administrator, and in compliance with the request contained in his Excellency's letter of the 23d instant (copy enclosed), I sent orders by special messenger the same day, overtaking the post-cart, which had already left that morning, for the headquarters and two companies of the 94th Foot—less about 50 men, including sick, to remain for the protection of barracks, stores, &c.—to proceed without delay by ordinary route march from Lydenburg to Pretoria.

"2. Also by special native runner, for one company 94th Foot to march from Marabastadt to Pretoria, together with a detatchment of the mounted troop of the same corps, which has been on escort with the Minister for Native Affairs, collecting hut taxes for the past five months.

"3. And, by telegraph and letter, for the detachments mounted troop

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Delay in requisition for the movement of the troops.

Looking back, after the terrible disaster which subsequently overtook the Lydenburg detachment of the 94th Regiment, one cannot but see that the delay in writing or delivering Sir Owen Lanyon's letter of the 23d November was a most untoward event.[1] It reached Colonel Bellairs, when in his office, at about noon the same day. Although he instantly sent off his staff officer—Captain Churchill—at a gallop to delay the post-cart, in case it should not have left, as usual, while he remained writing the requisite orders, it was too late; and, as before mentioned, it became necessary to despatch the sergeant, in the endeavour to overtake the cart, as it was hoped he might be able to do, at a place about forty-five miles off, where it sometimes stayed for a few hours during the night. In this attempt he proved unsuccessful, the cart having passed on after only a short halt.

94th Foot, now at Wakkerstroom, Newcastle, and Standerton, to concentrate at this last station and then march to Pretoria.

"4. The commissariat stores in the town at Lydenburg, and the sick in hospital, have been directed to be brought into the new barrack huts, thus saving rent for buildings hired, and rendering the defence of the post easier.

"5. The above troops may be expected to reach Pretoria about the 12th proximo, provided satisfactory transport arrangements can be made on the spot.

"*P.S.*—When the decision regarding the above moves was arrived at, telegraphic communication with Pietermaritzburg was defective; but on the 24th instant a telegram reporting the action taken was sent to you."

[1] So little importance was apparently attached to the immediate execution of this request for reinforcements, that no effort was made,—by an order from the Administrator's office,—to delay the departure of the post-cart—the only weekly means of quick communication with Lydenburg—leaving that forenoon, and so enabling the officer commanding to despatch his orders by that opportunity.

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The sergeant's horses on reaching Middleburg were knocked up, and he experienced difficulty and delay in replacing them, but eventually reached Lydenburg on the morning of the 27th—two days after the post-cart.

Additional troops asked for from Natal.

It was not until the 25th November that the Administrator considered it necessary to represent, by telegraph, to Sir George Colley that, "Hostile attitude of the Boers has become more marked. Mass meeting takes place in January. I think it would be advisable that 58th should return to Transvaal." Sir George Colley replied the following day to the effect that he could ill spare the 58th Regiment, in view of an expected outbreak of Pondos on the Natal-Cape frontier, but was willing to send two companies to Newcastle, so as to relieve and render available the companies of the 94th Regiment there and at Wakkerstroom. On receipt of this answer, Sir Owen Lanyon reported further, by letter (six days' post), on the subject, and urged that more troops should be spared for service in the Transvaal. As a result, later on, Sir George Colley detached four, instead of only two, companies of the 58th Regiment to Newcastle, with the intention that they should relieve Wakkerstroom and Standerton, thus setting free those companies of the 94th Regiment for the Pretoria garrison.[1] The movement was, however, begun too late to gain this last object, and hostilities had broken out for some days before the

The movement begun too late.

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2783), January 1881, No. 14 and enclosures.

companies of the 58th and 94th Regiments were able to reach Standerton. CHAP. I.

Orders were sent out, during the first week in December, by the military authorities in Pretoria to the out-stations and detachments on the march, desiring that, in the existing disturbed state of the country, every possible precaution should be exercised against surprise or attack, and for the safety of the cattle both by day and night when grazing or kraaled.[1]

But even to so late a period as the 5th December, Sir Owen Lanyon does not appear to have thought

[1] The following instructions, enjoining the utmost caution, were issued as early as the 24th November:—

"Officer Commanding, Pretoria.

"1. It behoves us at the present time, when armed Boers are known to be moving about the country in opposition to the law, to exercise great caution, and guard against any possible sudden attack. There must be no chance afforded to an adventurous and desperate leader, with one or two hundred followers, of being able to inflict damage by carrying off arms, ammunition, &c.

"2. No body of men, other than of her Majesty's troops, should be allowed to approach the camp by day or by night without a sufficient alarm having been given to enable the troops to stand to arms.

"3. Special precautions will be taken to secure the safety of all Royal Artillery and other guns, as well as all reserve arms, ammunition, &c. It may be expected that these guns, &c., will be the special object of attack, surprises, or sudden rush, should hostilities ensue.

"4. Steps will be taken to remove the imperial and colonial ammunition and stores from the present outlying magazine to the central white building in the ordnance yard, the guard over the former being then withdrawn.

"5. The colonial guns will be placed in suitable position for the protection of the town and camp, and parties of infantry will be told off for working them.

"6. Should the garrison become reduced by departure of a flying column, or an attack be expected, the unarmed natives could be utilised as scouts, to give notice of any bodies of men approaching or being in the vicinity.

W. Bellairs,
Colonel commanding Transvaal District.

"Pretoria, 24. 11. 80."

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the situation in any way critical. On that day,—while reporting to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the date for the assembly of the mass meeting had been advanced one month (to the 8th December), and with the full knowledge that none of the troops called up—as mentioned in this and the preceding note—could reach Pretoria in time,—he writes, "I still do not think there is much cause for anxiety." [1]

Indeed—as the despatches given in the Blue-book show [2]—the principal causes of anxiety at this period seem rather to have been, how best to reply to Mr C. K. White's criticism on "the existing form of government" [3]; framing and carrying through a new law for the regulation of "the puny press of the Transvaal," as Mr White aptly termed it, consisting of only two struggling papers; and the prosecution of Mr Celliers, the editor and proprietor of the 'Volksstem' [4]—the only Dutch organ.

As some of the later despatches sent from the Transvaal reached Downing Street only after it had become known, by telegraph, that the Boers had risen and invested all our garrisons, we cannot but think that they must have been found somewhat odd reading.

Date for assembly of mass meeting advanced.

Mr Hudson was formally informed, the day following his interview with the Boer Committee, that

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2783), February 1881, No. 12.

[2] See Blue-book (c.—2740), January 1881, No. 68, besides other despatches.

[3] See *ante*, p. 25.

[4] 'Voice of the People.'

a general meeting of the people had been called for the 8th December.[1]

Number of Boers under arms.

Owing to the short notice given, Boers at a distance were unable to arrive so early at the place appointed —Paarde Kraal—a farm about thirty-five miles from Pretoria, towards Potchefstroom; but, by the 13th, 4000 men were said to have met—a number probably increased a few days later. Altogether, by the 16th,

[1] Letter from Mr KRUGER.

(*Translation.*)

"KAALFONTEIN, *November* 29, 1880.

"SIR,—I beg to inform you herewith that I have submitted an account of our interview of this morning to the assembled people.

"We have agreed upon holding a general meeting of the people on the 8th December next.

"I hope and trust, as I informed you and as you agreed to, that the Government will place no obstacle in the way by summonses, writs of execution, or any military movements.

"Should it happen, however, that movements are taken on your part, I must distinctly inform you I shall not be responsible for the consequences.—I have, &c. S. J. P. KRUGER.

"The Honourable G. HUDSON,
Government Secretary."

Mr HUDSON's Answer to Mr KRUGER's Letter.

"POTCHEFSTROOM, *November* 30, 1880.

"SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date received by me at 1.25 P.M. to-day.

"I clearly placed before the committee my contention that no Government worthy of the name would submit to be called upon to suspend the operation of the law. In the form in which you placed matters before me, you threw upon the Government the responsibility of what might arise from any precipitate action on its part. The Government is fully aware of, and prepared to accept, the responsibility of its course of action.

"Major Clarke has now been appointed Special Commissioner for the district of Potchefstroom, to whom further correspondence if necessary may be addressed.—I have, &c. GEORGE HUDSON,
Colonial Secretary.

"S. J. PAUL KRUGER, Esq.,
Kaalfontein."

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it was reported there were 7000 men under arms throughout the country.

Intended place for their meeting surveyed.

Early in December, Lieutenant Littledale, of the Royal Engineers, accompanied by Mr Melvill, the Surveyor-General of the province, had been sent to sketch the approaches to Paarde Kraal, and gain information which might prove useful in a military point of view. The locality was found well chosen for the purposes intended. Situated on a plateau of a range of hills, offering a large field of observation, and at the foot of which the road from Pretoria to Potchefstroom passes, the position was naturally a strong one. The direct approaches from Pretoria were few, of a rocky precipitous nature, such as could easily have been defended by a determined foe; while, had the position been turned from the Heidelberg side, many serious obstacles presented themselves to an attacking force. The opportunity to avail ourselves of the knowledge thus gained did not, however, arise; though, on the 17th,—before the Boer Government's ultimatum had been received, and it became known that hostilities might be expected, with an immediate descent on Pretoria and attempt to capture the town, should its garrison be weakened,—it had been proposed and arranged by Colonel Bellairs—in the endeavour to improve the military position by eventual greater concentration—for a field column to leave the following morning for Potchefstroom, for the purpose of bringing away the guns, mounted infantry, and one company of infantry of the latter's garrison—the Administrator desiring that one com-

Projected attempt to bring about greater concentration of troops.

pany should still be left. The column, thus strengthened, was, on its way back, to have been joined by another under Colonel Bellairs, as soon as the arrival of the Lydenburg detachment admitted of it, when, it was thought, should necessity require it, a combined attack could be adventured on the Boer position. With the advent, however, the same night, of Mr Hendrick Schoeman, bringing the Boer ultimatum, this plan was—and well it was so—abandoned, and the order cancelled, as involving too much risk to the town.

Telegraph wires cut.

The telegraph wires were cut on the 15th, communication with Natal by that means then ceasing. Sappers sent from Pretoria to endeavour to repair the line, were unable to effect their object, being interfered with by the Boers, and the poles thrown down.[1] Probably the last telegrams sent from Pretoria were those from Sir Owen Lanyon and Colonel Bellairs to Sir George Colley, giving the resolution passed at the mass meeting establishing the South African Republic, Colonel Bellairs referring to the positions of the detachments of the 94th Regiment, then on the march, and foreshadowing the probability of conflict commencing, by attack on the latter.[2]

[1] See Appendix C.

[2] From Colonel Commanding, Pretoria, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Pietermaritzburg, 14th December :—

"Boer meeting said to consist of four thousand, who have unfurled Republican flag, elected Kruger Vice-President, Joubert Commandant-General, and others as Commandants. Further intentions not known, but stated that first attack will be on Potchefstroom—doubtful. 94th left Lydenburg 5th, but may not be here before 20th, roads being bad and rivers full. 94th from Newcastle and Wakkerstroom will be con-

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Hazardous military position.

The hazardous nature of the military position—deliberately chosen, and obstinately adhered to, notwithstanding the frequent protests and advice of the officer commanding the troops—was now fully exemplified, and seen to be bearing its natural consequences. By the act of the Boers assembling earlier than originally notified, the military power for concentration was reduced to a minimum—more or less dependent on their abstention from attack of detachments on the march. No sufficient body of troops remained available for a strong field column, and, at the same time, to prevent the capital falling into the hands of the enemy. While threatening the seat of Government, from a camp only a day's ride distant, large bodies of armed mounted men could be rapidly detached, in any direction, to harass or overwhelm small numbers of troops, unaccompanied by cavalry, endeavouring to concentrate. All that the various military posts could do was to act on the defensive.

Boer proclamation and resolution.

The mass meeting, on the 13th December, proceeded to elect Mr P. Kruger Vice-President, and with Messrs M. W. Pretorius and P. J. Joubert to form a triumvirate, to carry on their Government. Mr P. J. Joubert became Commandant-General; Dr Jorissen, State Attorney; and Mr E. Bok, State Secretary. The members present belonging to the

centrated at Standerton about 21st, and then march for Pretoria. All have been warned to proceed cautiously, and guard cattle against surprise.

"*If any conflict takes place, will perhaps commence by attack on 94th.*" *

* Cipher.

former Volksraad resumed their sittings. A proclamation was drawn up setting forth their grievances under British rule, and declaring their former independence now restored. This document was then sent to Potchefstroom to be printed, accompanied by a body of about 800 armed men to prevent any interruption of the work. The proclamation was finally dated the 16th December. Its last clause made known that, from that date, the whole country was "placed in a state of siege, and under the stipulations of the War Ordinance."

Virtual declaration of war by the Boers.

The Boer patrols from the Paarde Kraal camp had been met by our scouts within twenty-five miles of Pretoria; but on the 16th a large portion of their forces had moved on Heidelberg, where their Government took possession of the public offices, and established themselves. The Republic was, the same day, formally proclaimed, and the flag hoisted amidst great cheering.

Boer Government established at Heidelberg.

In order "to prevent the concentration of a large body of troops at Pretoria,"[1] Commandant F. Joubert was sent with a force in the direction of Middleburg, to intercept the detachment of the 94th Regiment on the march from Lydenburg, and then detained at the Oliphant river. Similarly, another force was despatched towards Standerton. "To prevent all bloodshed"—as it is grimly put in a later proclamation of the triumvirate[2]—circulars were given to the Boer Commandants in charge of these parties, ad-

Boer troops sent to intercept British detachments on the march.

[1] Blue-book (c.—2838), March 1881, Para. 23 to enclosure 13.

[2] See Para. 5 of above proclamation.

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dressed to the officers in command of her Majesty's troops wherever met with, desiring that any further advance should be arrested, or such movement would be taken as a declaration of war. The details connected with the surprise and destruction of the Lydenburg detachment are given in another chapter. That the other detachments did not share a similar disastrous fate, may be largely ascribed to the officers in command having, in the spirit of the instructions they had received, adopted proper precautions, and made forced marches to their destinations. When it became known that the mass meeting had been summoned a month earlier than originally intended, urgent messages were sent by telegraph or other means to officers commanding detachments on the march, desiring them to provide against surprise, and hasten their movements. The company of the 94th Regiment, under Captain Campbell — 58 non-commissioned officers and men, with 6 mounted infantrymen — which left Marabastadt on the 30th November, used such expedition that it reached Pretoria on the 10th December, without molestation on the way. The mounted troop of the 94th Regiment, under Captain O'Grady and Lieutenant Carden, had arrived two days before.

Local forces raised in Pretoria.

When replying to the telegraphic inquiry made by Sir George Colley—"What local forces can you enrol, if necessary? Loyal inhabitants must support Government in maintaining order,"—Sir Owen Lanyon remarks upon "the difficulty which the Government

will experience in obtaining support from the loyal inhabitants," and says, "little can be expected from them in this direction;" and that, "owing to the circumstances in which this province was annexed, and the fact that all the people are mixed up with and dependent on the Boers, in trade and other pursuits, it is impossible that the Government can rely upon them for that material assistance which might be expected in other places."[1]

Praiseworthy efforts were, however, made by some of the leading inhabitants to raise corps of volunteers, which formed the nuclei of—what, later on, became known as—the Pretoria Carbineers, Nourse's Horse, the Pretoria Rifles, and the Volunteer Artillery. From 150 to 200 men were thus enrolled, a portion of whom, under drill instructors furnished by the garrison, or some few of themselves who had already gone through their novitiate in arms—might be seen each evening, during the fortnight preceding hostilities, intent on qualifying themselves to take their part in the coming tug of war.

In a later despatch, Sir Owen Lanyon illustrates still further the impediments which stood in the way, at this period, of forming a serviceable local force. After mentioning that only about one-third of those capable of bearing arms came forward to aid the Government, in case any attack should be made, he adds: "In some instances the young men of the town were prevented from following the dictates of their loyalty by their employers, who feared to lose some

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2740), January 1881. Enclosure 4 in No. 73.

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of their Boer customers, should it become known that their *employés* had joined the volunteers. Others held back from motives of false prudence, or from a dislike to be under military control, in which possibly their juniors in rank and position might be placed over them, on account of their being trained and more fit."

The intention of Sir George Colley, in directing the Administrator to call upon all loyal inhabitants to support the Government, would appear to have been that such men should be employed solely in the defence of the town, and not for purposes of attack; for in his despatch of the 19th December, he is found writing thus to the Secretary of State for the Colonies: "I had previously asked the Administrator to call upon the loyal inhabitants of the Transvaal to support the Government, and a volunteer force of 200 men has been raised for the defence of Pretoria. I propose, however, to employ this and similar forces as far as possible in the defence of these towns, &c., and to avoid, where practicable, bringing them directly in contact with the Boers. The feelings that would be aroused by such a civil war would be more bitter and enduring than any resulting from a direct conflict with Government."[1] With the further development of the situation, however, this wise course was not found wholly practicable as the main patrolling duties around Pretoria had to be assigned to the mounted volunteers, and no attack on the enemy's positions could be undertaken without their co-operation.

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2783), February 1881, No. 37.

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Moral effect of dynamite experiments.

With the object of giving the people around some idea of the power in the hands of the military for defensive purposes, experiments were publicly carried out with dynamite and powder, under the direction of Major Le Mesurier, R.E., on the camp ground; and sundry explosions were effected after dark on the hills overlooking the town, to convey the impression that mines were in process of construction in various parts. Although the Landdrost had been requested to give notice to the townspeople, somehow many did not learn until too late what was about to take place, and in consequence one heard afterwards of ludicrous cases of dire alarm and consternation, showing that, in some instances, at all events, the moral effect had been great!

Agent sent by Boer Government with their ultimatum.

At about eleven o'clock on the night of the 17th December, Mr Hendrik Schoeman presented himself at Government House, accredited as the "diplomatic agent" of the triumvirate, and bearing copies of the proclamation already issued by the latter at Heidelberg on the 16th, together with a letter to Sir Owen Lanyon, requesting that, as "in 1877 our then Government gave up the keys of the public offices without bloodshed," so "we trust that your Excellency, as representative of the noble British nation, will not less nobly and in the same way place our Government in the position to assume the administration. We expect your answer within twice twenty-four hours."

A proclamation was thereupon issued on the 18th

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Proclamation issued by the Administrator.

by the Administrator, declaring the province to be in a state of rebellion, and that in consequence, the officer commanding her Majesty's troops had been requested to put down insurrection wherever found to exist. Copies of this proclamation were on the 19th given to Mr Schoeman, with merely a covering letter from the Colonial Secretary, acknowledging the receipt of the "communication" brought from Heidelberg. Hostilities had, however, before this commenced at Potchefstroom; and Sir Owen Lanyon's answer was not even waited for, before despatching the force sent to intercept the detachment coming from Lydenburg.

Defences of the town of Pretoria.

The vicinity of such a large body of armed horsemen, together with the advent of Mr Schoeman bringing the Boer ultimatum on the 17th December, caused increased activity in recruiting and drilling the volunteers; many now joining, "as an example to others," who had never before handled a rifle, and were likely to be—certainly at first—more dangerous to friend than foe. Major Le Mesurier, Commanding Royal Engineer, was placed in command of the town district, and directed to organise its defence, with the help of the local artillery and foot volunteers,—the central market-place being adapted for the main post, and certain buildings as block-houses to command the entrances to the town. With the aid of the sappers, and parties of natives pressed into the service — the townspeople generally preferring to look on and criticise—this plan for defence soon

assumed shape. Houses and walls were loopholed; doors and windows barricaded; the Dutch church in the centre of the large market-square was enclosed within a parapet and ditch, forming an inner line of defence to the houses surrounding the square; and waggons were drawn across the entrances as barriers.

Cordons of sentries—inner and outer lines—were thrown out at night, when the challenging and demanding the countersign became incessant. Throughout the nights of the 19th and 20th, the energy shown in this way was tremendous. It could scarcely have continued at such fever-heat. The "rounds" were on the move, visiting the citizen soldiers at all hours, seeing that each man was alert on his post and understood his duty.

The first shots.

The first shots exchanged in the immediate neighbourhood of Pretoria were on the morning of the 19th December, when Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, accompanying a mounted patrol along the Potchefstroom road, observed, about nine miles out, a Boer scout on a hill. Putting spurs to his horse, he and Mr Francis, a volunteer of the party, chased him for over a mile, when, Mr Francis having been left behind, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea captured man, horse, and rifle. Another scout, meanwhile, coming into sight, fired on the party, who thereupon returned the shot; but then perceiving about forty Boers preparing to saddle-up at a farmhouse laager near by, the party deemed it prudent to fall back, the prisoner being

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taken with them."[1] The fact of a live rebel having been lodged in the jail seemed to give great satisfaction to the loyal party in the town, then busy holding meetings, clamouring for martial law, or joining in the defence of the place.

Captain Lambart taken prisoner.

Intelligence was now received of the capture of Captain Lambart, of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers, and his being held as a prisoner at Heidelberg. This officer, accompanied by a Mr M'Hattie, had been sent in October from Pretoria to purchase horses in the Orange Free State, to complete the artillery and mounted infantry; Mr M'Hattie to obtain horses similarly for Ferriera's Horse, then marching through the Free State to Basutoland.[2] Captain Lambart had reached to within a day's journey of Pretoria on his way back, bringing between forty and fifty horses with him, when the Boers took both him and his horses. No means of communication with Captain Lambart had offered, his whereabouts being latterly unknown.

Reports from Potchefstroom.

Then came bad news from Potchefstroom—a report from Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe, dated 16th December, smuggled past the Boer patrols—the last message received from thence in Pretoria. Hostilities had commenced on that date; the enemy occupied the town, whilst the troops were restricted to the camp

[1] Colonel Bellairs, in his observations made on the report of this incident, says: "A spirited little outpost affair; but Lieut.-Colonel Gildea must intrust such minor expeditions to subordinate officers, and refrain as far as possible from personally exposing himself on such occasions."

[2] See *ante*, p. 42.

position, jail, and public buildings; Captain Fulls, of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, who, together with Major Clarke—Special Commissioner—Captain Raaf, and twenty volunteers, held the public buildings, had been killed, and several men wounded. This intelligence was supplemented, from Boer sources, by the further information that the public buildings had been taken, together with their defenders.

News of the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster.

But the morning of the 21st December brought still more gloomy news into Pretoria, spreading dismay and consternation through the town, and intensifying the already growing ill-feeling against the Boers—the intelligence that the headquarters detachment of the 94th Regiment had been surprised the previous day, when on the march about 37 miles off, every officer and man having been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.

It had been calculated that Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther, having at length been able to cross the Oliphant, might reach Botha's Pass, a dangerous defile, 16 to 20 miles from Pretoria, on the 21st; so, accordingly, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea had been instructed by Colonel Bellairs to proceed in that direction at an early hour that day, with the double object of bringing in forage from a farmhouse nine miles away—the same one mentioned hereafter as visited by Captain Burr on the 5th January—and, with the mounted men, feeling for or giving assistance to the 94th detachment in the neighbourhood of Botha's Pass. For this purpose, a company of infantry, with a Krupp gun carried on a waggon, and

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all the available mounted men—sixty—moved off at two o'clock. The morning was dark; they had proceeded only about two miles out when two weary, footsore men, both slightly wounded, were discovered in the hands of the advanced scouts, thrown out for the protection of the town. These were Conductor Egerton of the Commissariat and Transport Department, and Sergeant Bradley of the 94th Regiment, who, allowed by the Boers, had left the fatal ground of Bronkhorst Spruit soon after the conflict, and for eleven long hours had trudged through the dark night to Pretoria, there to tell the sad tale of disaster.

They were at once mounted on horses, and by four o'clock Mr Egerton was making his report to Colonel Bellairs, and delivering an urgent message for surgical help. Arrangements were quickly made. A civil practitioner, Dr Harvey Crow, was engaged to go out and remain with such of the wounded as would not be able to be moved; and this gentleman, in company with Surgeon-Major Comerford—who was to return—some hospital orderlies, and two ambulances, were soon on the road to render the assistance asked for. The Rev. Father Meyer also accompanied the party.

CHAPTER II.

THE BRONKHORST SPRUIT DISASTER.[1]

The Lydenburg detachment ordered to Pretoria.

THE circumstances which led to and attended the despatch of the order for calling in the greater portion of the Lydenburg detachment of the 94th Regiment to Pretoria have been already alluded to.[2] This means for concentrating more troops at Pretoria did not recommend itself as the best to the officer commanding the troops, and it was not his intention to have interfered with the Lydenburg garrison; but such was that officer's anxiety to obtain additional troops for the formation of a field column, that he at once acquiesced in Sir Owen Lanyon's proposal, and promptly took steps to give effect to it.

Nature of instructions sent.

The orders reached Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther at 10.30 A.M. on the 27th November. Among other

[1] Several more or less unreliable accounts, purporting to describe the Bronkhorst Spruit affair, have appeared at different times; but we have not met with any so correctly, clearly, and intelligently written as that which was given some months later—1st June 1881—in the 'Natal Witness.' Full official reports will be found in Blue-book (c.—2866), pp. 130-149.

[2] See *ante*, pp. 53-56.

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things for his guidance, he was therein informed that his withdrawal from Lydenburg was to be considered as only a temporary measure; that he should march without delay; and that the senior commissariat officer was—by the same messenger—sending instructions regarding transport and other arrangements.

Lydenburg deficient of means for mobilising.

The power of rapidly mobilising the outlying garrisons—so necessary in the circumstances in which the troops were placed, in a country where transport is invariably a standing difficulty—had, from motives of false economy, been withdrawn in September, notwithstanding that Colonel Bellairs had deprecated such action, and had urged the expediency of waiting at least a few months, until after the mass meeting—then called for January—had taken place. The Lydenburg garrison was thenceforward to be regarded as stationary, and a very small amount of transport, only adequate for local camp purposes, was allowed to remain. Now that the garrison was urgently required to march, the troops became wholly dependent upon the people they were supposed to hold in check for the transport required to enable them to move.

Difficulty in hiring transport.

Tenders for the supply of waggons for the march were called for, and the commissariat officer either went himself, or sent to the farmers in the neighbourhood, to endeavour to obtain the number wanted. Great reluctance was exhibited to furnish them, and they were only eventually obtained at high rates of hiring, and by guaranteeing their owners against loss through action of an enemy or swollen rivers, at

high valuations—waggons at £150, and oxen at £10 each. CHAP. II.

Excessive quantity of transport required by the commanding officer.

In the written instruction relating to transport—sent by the Assistant Commissary-General of Transport at Pretoria to Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Carter at Lydenburg—it was intimated that on no account should more than a dozen waggons accompany the troops, but that fewer should suffice. The officer commanding, however, demanded twenty-six ox-waggons, in addition to an ox-waggon, two mule-waggons, a water-cart, and an ox-ambulance already in possession. Mr Carter objected that this number was largely in excess of that allowed by regulation, and the instructions he had received. Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther, nevertheless, overruled the objection, ordered Mr Carter to furnish that number of waggons, and said that he himself would take all responsibility. Two additional waggons were later on requisitioned for the conveyance of fuel, and even two more on the eve of departure, but could not be obtained. An ox-waggon was also hired for the regimental canteen.

The detachment leaves Lydenburg.

Finally, the detachment—consisting of nine officers, 254 non-commissioned officers and men, three women, and two children—moved off on the morning of the 5th December, taking with it a convoy of thirty ox-waggons, two mule-waggons, one water-cart, and one ox-ambulance, with probably about sixty native drivers and foreloopers. Eight days had been consumed in collecting the hired transport. It is reasonable to believe that, had it been only sought to meet the legitimate requirements of the detachment on the

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march, the day of departure might have been advanced. Not only would delay have been saved in starting, but the progress made each day on the march would have been greater and safer. This will be clear to any one having acquaintance with the difficulties attending travelling with a long line of ox-waggons in such a country, at such a time of the year, when heavy rains render the roads almost impassable in places, and the rivers difficult or impossible to cross. Such a convoy—thirty-three waggons—must have stretched out at times to nearly a mile, and, while most difficult to protect, must have most materially retarded the march. Accordingly, we find that, although no difficulty was experienced in crossing the Crocodile river, Middleburg—about half-way to Pretoria—was not reached until the 14th December.

Inquiry ordered at headquarters into cause of delay in march.

Colonel Bellairs, reporting to Sir George Colley on the 25th November, calculated that, "provided satisfactory transport arrangements can be made on the spot," both the Marabastadt and Lydenburg detachments should be able to reach Pretoria about the 12th December. The former, with nearly as long a march, arrived before that date. The apparent delay in the latter's start, and the extraordinary amount of transport accompanying the troops, becoming known at Pretoria, caused much surprise to the military authorities; and Colonel Bellairs at once, in anticipation of their arrival, directed that all the circumstances should be inquired into, and the contents of the waggons inspected before unloading, by the Deputy-Assistant

Adjutant-General and the Assistant Commissary-General of Transport. CHAP. II.

The troops found the Boers along the road, with one exception, very friendly, and willing to dispose of any articles of produce. Some were on their way to the mass meeting assembling at Paarde Kraal; but no importance seems to have been attached by the officer commanding to this known fact. No suspicion was entertained that the movements of the column were being followed and watched all the way, and that men were mixing with them who soon afterwards would be encountered rifle in hand fighting against them. One man, the landlord of a Lydenburg public-house, was recognised immediately after the fight carrying a rifle, and going about looting the dead. He had been in the camp the previous night drinking with the sergeants. Details of the march.

A day's halt was made at Middleburg on the 15th, when fresh provisions were procured, and some repairs to damaged waggons executed. This delay did not make any ultimate difference, the Oliphant river in advance being reported impassable. This river was reached the following morning, but found still too swollen for crossing, and the march could not be resumed until the morning of the 18th, the drift having by then become fordable.

On the 15th December some professedly neutral Boers had come into Pretoria from Paarde Kraal; and from what they let drop, and other sources of infor- Warning of possible attack sent from Pretoria.

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mation, Colonel Bellairs was able to gather that two separate bodies, said to have consisted of 500 armed men each, had left, or were about to leave, the Boer camp for directions not then clear, though later information indicated that the one party had gone in the Wakkerstroom direction, and the other towards Middleburg. Colonel Bellairs thereupon despatched a special mounted messenger—one of the Transvaal mounted police, composed of Bastards — to warn Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther of what had come to his knowledge. That officer was instructed that, although no hostilities had as yet taken place, caution should be exercised to guard against any sudden attack or surprise of cattle on the march. Being aware that the Lieutenant-Colonel had no sufficient mounted force with him — only four mounted infantrymen—for efficient scouting purposes, Colonel Bellairs desired him to "send forward natives (foreloopers, &c.) to reconnoitre along the tops of and over the hills before advancing." The more dangerous portion of the road to be traversed—the Botha Hill range, a defile about four miles long, entered twenty miles from Pretoria—was also indicated, though, as it turned out, the Boers did not think it necessary to wait until the detachment had reached this part before delivering their attack.[1]

[1] The following was the text of the warning and instructions sent :—

"The Officer Commanding 94th Regiment.

"500 armed Boers are said to have left the Boer camp, situated 40 miles from this, on the road to Potchefstroom, yesterday, direction unknown.

"No hostilities have taken place as yet, but caution should be ex-

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Warning received and acknowledged.

The letter was delivered to Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther at 6 A.M. on the 17th, while still waiting, on the Middleburg side, to cross the Oliphant river; and at 10 A.M., the same messenger was sent back with the Lieutenant-Colonel's acknowledgment of receipt, and saying that the instructions laid down for his guidance would be carried out.

A rooted belief was, however, entertained that the Boers meant nothing, and did not intend mischief. This preconceived view was carefully en-

ercised to guard against any sudden attack or surprise of cattle on the march, especially at Botha Hill range or defile, between Pretoria and Honey's farm, about 20 miles from the former.

"Send forward natives (foreloopers, &c.) to reconnoitre along the tops of and over the hills before advancing.

"Send back a message by the bearer as to your whereabouts, and when you expect to arrive here. W. BELLAIRS,

Colonel Commanding Transvaal District.

"PRETORIA, 15*th December* 1880,
9 P.M."

The following order—intended more particularly as an instruction to the officer about to be left in charge of the Lydenburg post—was also received by Lieutenant-Colonel Anstruther some days previous to his leaving. See Blue-book (c.—2866), April 1881, p. 163.

"From the Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, Pretoria, to the Officer Commanding, Lydenburg.

"PRETORIA, 24*th November* 1880.

"Owing to the present disturbed state of the Transvaal, you are instructed to neglect no precaution to guard against surprise or sudden attack, and with that end in view to take immediate measures to render your present position defensible. In connection therewith the Colonel Commandant has intimated, as his opinion, that the huts would be the most tenable and secure position you could adopt in the event of an attack. You will accordingly proceed without delay to put them in condition for such an emergency, by barricading and removal of obstructions to your fire, as your judgment and experience may dictate.

"By Order,

"M. CHURCHILL,
Captain, Brigade Major."

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couraged by designing men met with, or who mixed with the troops, on the march. Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther and his officers remained deceived until the moment of attack, and were surprised in their resultant unpreparedness. On the very morning, when halting for breakfast near the farmhouse of the field-cornet of the district, the latter entered into conversation with the officers, and, no doubt, in order to remove any suspicions entertained respecting Boers who might be observed collecting, told them that a friendly meeting was going on close by; also, that emissaries had gone through the country endeavouring to rouse the people to stop the march of the troops, but that the appeal had met with no response. Thus lulled into a sense of false security, the troops marched on to their fate.

Order of march described.

The Oliphant having become fordable, the waggons were passed over on the 18th, and the march continued. The morning of the 20th found the troops halting for their breakfast by the farmhouse of the field-cornet, who, as has been stated, succeeded in misleading Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther and his officers in regard to the peaceable intentions of the Boers around. Moving on, about noon, less than an hour's further advance brought them to the locality selected by the Boers for their attack.

Slowly, at perhaps little more than two miles an hour, the convoy wound its interminable length along the road, the officer commanding, accompanied by two or three officers on horseback, leading the way;

the band, of some thirty performers, playing a quick step, closely followed by a company about seventy strong; the quarter-guard, thirteen strong, coming after; with the provost-escort and prisoners, about twenty-three men, preceding the waggons, each of which was escorted by a couple of soldiers on either side; then the rear-guard of twenty men, at an interval of seventy paces.

Insufficient scouting.

The scouting carried out for such a lengthy column was little more than nominal, and, as it turned out, totally inadequate. It was performed by the four mounted infantrymen only,—one being supposed to examine the country from the rise in front of the column, and another from the highest hill in the vicinity. Even this small amount of scouting could not have been executed intelligently—perhaps because no belief in the imminence of attack was entertained, and the trouble was considered too great.[1] The natives attached to the transport-waggons were not utilised at all in this way, or to gain information as to the movements or intentions of the Boers. Even had they been so, it is of course possible that the troops might still have been defeated, outnumbered as they were by a determined foe; but at least they would not have been surprised, would have encountered the enemy in better formation, and have inflicted heavy losses before surrendering.

Other irregularities.

Other irregularities are known to have occurred

[1] One, however, of the mounted infantrymen would appear to have been riding alongside and conversing with a soldier in the ammunition-waggon. Blue-book (c.—2866), p. 56.

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on the march, showing the state of unpreparedness which existed to cope against a sudden attack. Only thirty, in place of seventy, rounds of ammunition were carried by each man; there was reason for believing that the lids of the reserve boxes of ammunition were not unscrewed or in readiness for sudden emergency; the band, to the number of about thirty men, were leading the column, unarmed, and, when the enemy came down upon them, had hurriedly to seek rifles in a waggon to their rear; some of the men alongside the waggons had disembarrassed themselves of their rifles, and placed them on the waggons; a sergeant, who had been attached to the officers' mess, was marching in plain clothes, unarmed.

Boer preparations to attack.

The duty of preventing the concentration of more troops at Pretoria, from the Lydenburg garrison, had been intrusted to Commandant Franz Joubert. He is believed to have left the Paarde Kraal camp for the purpose about the 15th December. Another body of 300 men is said to have been collected from the district to the north-east of Pretoria, and to have assembled, under Hans Botha—the Commandant who was, on the 6th January, wounded and taken prisoner at Zwart Kopje—at the latter's farm, sixteen miles from Pretoria. Other parties of Boers, coming up later from the Lydenburg and Middleburg districts, probably increased the force to nearly 1000 men.

The original intention was to have attacked the troops after they had entered the Botha Hill defile; but finding that they were detained by the high state

of the Oliphant river—and, no doubt, having noted the unguarded manner in which their advance was conducted—the Boers decided to move forward, and finally selected the locality by Bronkhorst Spruit as offering sufficient advantages for their object. The spot was well chosen,—a piece of ground about one mile in diameter, sparsely wooded with small thorn-trees, and sloping down from either side to the road, which passed through the centre. Adjacent ravines and valleys, together with farmhouses and yards thickly surrounded by trees and gardens, offered ample cover to conceal a considerable force in the immediate neighbourhood. While one portion of the Boer force remained hidden on the spot, another is said to have watched and followed the troops all the way from the Oliphant. The disposition of the parties for the attack, at the moment when the troops should reach the spot selected, was all prearranged; even the distances marked out by stones, to suit their rifles for point-blank range.

The fight.

At about one o'clock on the 20th December, the leading troops had reached the centre of the ground already spoken of, when the band abruptly stopped playing, owing to about 150 armed mounted Boers, in skirmishing formation, suddenly showing themselves at only some hundred yards' distance on the rise to the left. Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther at once galloped back, and ordered the leading waggon to halt, and the remainder to close up. Then a Boer, with a flag of truce, advancing midway, the

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Lieutenant-Colonel, having dismounted, walked to meet him, and received a closed letter, written in English. Reading this, he found that he was required, in the names of the triumvirate of the South African Republic, to remain stationary, or any forward movement would be taken as a declaration of war.[1] Lieutenant-Colonel Anstruther informed the messenger verbally that he was unable to comply with such a request, his orders being to proceed with all possible despatch to Pretoria, but that he had no wish to meet the Commandant hostilely. The messenger said he would give the reply; and being asked by the Lieutenant-Colonel to let him know the result, he nodded assent.

[1] "South African Republic, Heidelberg, *December* 19, 1880.

"To the Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's troops, on the road between Lydenburg and Pretoria.

"Sir,—We have the honour to inform you that the Government of the South African Republic have taken up their residence at Heidelberg.

"That a Diplomatic Commissioner has been sent by them to his Excellency Sir W. Owen Lanyon.

"That, until the arrival of his Excellency's answer, we do not know whether we are in a state of war or not.

"That, consequently, we cannot allow any movement of troops from your side, and wish you to stop where you are.

"We, not being at war with her Majesty the Queen, nor with the people of England, who we are sure to be on our side if they were acquainted with the position, but only recovering the independence of our country, we do not wish to take to arms, and therefore inform you that any movement of troops from your side will be taken by us as a declaration of war, the responsibility whereof we put on your shoulders, as we know what we will have to do in self-defence.—We are, sir, your obedient servants,

"S. J. P. Kruger, *Vice-President.*
"M. W. Pretorius.
"P. J. Joubert, *Commandant-General.*
"W. Edward Bok, *Act.-Secretary to the Government.*"

Meanwhile, during the time Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther had been engaged in reading the letter, the Boers had advanced to within three hundred yards of the road in that part, and other parties of Boers had come up in the rear and on the right flank.

On leaving the messenger, Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther ran back as fast as he could towards his men, ordering the leading company to skirmish; but it was too late. Before the files could open out, the Boers had advanced, as previously arranged, to point-blank range of their rifles—about one hundred and thirty paces distant from the troops—no doubt having already marked the officers and sergeants; and thence, having previously dismounted, and left their horses behind them, delivered a murderous fire. The fire was returned; but looking at the disadvantageous position in which the soldiers were placed,—surprised and confused in the midst of executing a movement; numbers of their officers and themselves shot down; bandsmen—eleven were killed—running to the rear to arm themselves; and having to fire uphill,—it may be reasonably surmised that their fire was comparatively feeble and ineffectual. The Boers fired, some lying, some sitting down, some from behind trees and stones; the soldiers, after the first discharge, lying down on the grass along the roadside. At the head of the column the Boer fire at first seemed to be directed on the officers, the leading oxen, and the two first waggons, which contained arms and ammunition, denoted by red flags, and from which the bandsmen and prisoners were hastily arming themselves.

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It was said afterwards that the band were playing for the last time on the march, it being the intention that they should join the ranks on reaching the next camping-ground. On the flanks and rear, volleys were fired at a few hundred yards' distance, and then the Boers, dashing up to the waggons, shot the leading oxen, and killed or wounded a large number of those in charge. The rear-guard all fell but three men.

Cessation of the action.

When the unequal fight had thus raged for about ten minutes, Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther — himself lying desperately wounded in the legs in five places— seeing the uselessness of prolonging the conflict—all the officers and three-fifths of the non-commissioned officers and men being already killed or wounded— directed the "cease fire" to be sounded, and the men to hoist their white helmets, and wave white handkerchiefs in token of surrender.

This done, the Boers closed in, ordered all arms to be laid down, and formed a cordon round the spot. Commandant Franz Joubert came forward and shook hands with Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther, expressing his regret at seeing him among the wounded. The mess-sergeant afterwards giving the Lieutenant-Colonel a glass of champagne to recruit his exhausted condition, asked the Commandant to take one likewise, which he did, saying—"I drink to the health of the Queen of England; and I hope the soldiers will leave the Transvaal, and let us have back our Dutch Republic." Soldiers and Boers also became very friendly.

Leave was given for the retention of seven or eight of the waggons, containing the officers' and mess

baggage, provisions, and hospital equipment, the water-cart, twenty tents for the wounded, and eighteen uninjured men to look after the latter. The remaining unwounded prisoners, with the rest of the waggons, and all but two oxen left for the water-cart, were removed to Heidelberg. The dead were stripped of boots, coats, &c., and the swords of the lieutenant-colonel and adjutant taken; but immediately the arms were laid down, the Boers became most obliging, and willing to do all they could for the greater comfort of the wounded—milk, butter, eggs, bread, and fruit were brought in, and no payment asked at first.

Casualties.

At the close of the action the casualties were found to amount to 155—viz., 1 officer and 55 men killed; and 7 officers—including Conductor Egerton—91 men, and 1 woman wounded. Some of the latter succumbed the same day, and many more later on, the death-roll eventually mounting to 77 officers and men. The injuries received were generally of an unusually severe type.

Lieutenant and Adjutant Harrison was killed on the spot, having been shot through the head, alongside his colonel, while encouraging his men. Captain Nairne and Lieutenant M'Swiney died the same day, and Lieutenant-Colonel Anstruther and Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Carter a few days after. Lieutenant Hume was severely wounded, but finally recovered. Surgeon Ward and Conductor Egerton were both slightly wounded. Captain and Paymaster

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Elliot escaped, though only to be murdered some weeks later—shot, when crossing the Vaal river in company with Captain Lambart of the Royal Scots Fusiliers—by a Boer escort ordered to convey him over the frontier into the Orange Free State.

Care of the wounded.

It was well that Surgeon Ward had received only a flesh-wound of the thigh, insufficient to incapacitate him from caring for the wounded. Working unceasingly from the moment the combat was over, and through the night, it was not until six o'clock the following morning that he had seen the last man who required his attention. In his efforts to alleviate suffering he was heroically assisted by Mrs Marion Smith, widow of the bandmaster of the 94th Regiment, who was on her way to embark for England. Quitting the waggon in which she was riding with her two little children, this gentle young woman at once courageously went forward and helped the surgeon to bandage the wounds, often with strips torn from her own clothing. Mrs Fox, the wife of the sergeant-major of the 94th Regiment—also wounded—was dangerously wounded when in the same waggon with Mrs Smith, but afterwards recovered.[1]

Medical help sent for to Pretoria.

Seeing the urgent necessity for additional surgical help, Conductor Egerton, although wounded in the hand, volunteered his services to go to Pretoria, and Sergeant Bradley, officers' mess-sergeant, to accompany him. Both being dressed as civilians, the Boer Commandant, not supposing them to be soldiers, the more readily gave them permission, with a safe-conduct

[1] See Appendix D.

through the Boer lines. Horses were, however, refused them. The messengers were soon on their way, and, as already related, after a long and painful tramp through the dark night, across rough tracks and boggy drifts, succeeded in carrying the melancholy report of disaster, and appeal for medical assistance, into Pretoria before daylight the following morning.

The colours saved.

In the absence of officers, the colours of the 94th Regiment had been carried by Orderly-room Sergeant Maistre and Sergeant Master-tailor Pears, who was slightly wounded. Seeing their danger from capture, these non-commissioned officers quietly hid them away under the bed of Mrs Fox, then lying dangerously wounded in the hospital waggon. Afterwards the colours were torn off their poles, and, being secreted under the coats of two bandsmen, were taken into a tent pitched for the wounded, where Conductor Egerton, as soon as he had obtained leave to set out to Pretoria, secured them, and tying them round his waist, so safely carried them into Pretoria.[1]

Boer losses.

It is impossible to reconcile the conflicting statements which have been made respecting the losses incurred by the enemy. The Boers themselves declared that there had been but two killed and five wounded. Conductor Egerton—who, from his pre-

[1] For his gallant conduct on this occasion, Mr Egerton received a lieutenant's commission in the 94th Regiment; and Sergeants Bradley, Maistre, and Pears received distinguished-service medals.

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vious experiences as an officer in the South American States, may no doubt be relied upon for cool observation—did not think there were more; and, as already hinted, the circumstances under which the column was surprised does not warrant the belief that our fire caused the enemy much loss; yet two non-commissioned officers, who had gone to neighbouring farms for milk, &c., asserted that they had seen twenty-seven coffins outside one house, and seventeen by another, lying near open graves, ready for interment. If these men were incorrect in their statements, one can only imagine that they must have been deceived by some extraordinary optical delusion. A native who had been forced to accompany part of the Boer force to Bronkhorst Spruit, and was present at the action, but had later on escaped into Pretoria, affirmed that the dead on the Boer side were removed in three waggons to a farm some distance off, where there was a women's laager, and that there were forty bodies.

Arrival of additional medical assistance.

The arrival of Surgeon-Major Comerford, Dr Harvey Crow, and the Rev. Father Meyer, from Pretoria, on the 22d December, with two ambulances and some hospital orderlies, gave much-needed assistance. Many capital operations were performed. The ambulance-oxen were utilised in removing the numerous dead animals about, and the camp was changed to a better site. Father Meyer returned soon after to Pretoria with an ambulance containing some of the slightly wounded men; and Surgeon-Major Comerford, with some more similar cases, followed on the

4th January, leaving Dr Harvey Crow to assist Surgeon Ward. The camp was not broken up until hostilities had ceased.

Death of Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther.

Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther died on the 26th December. Lying on the ground, shattered by the first volley from the Boers, he had yet continued calmly to the last to issue instructions to those around, and to think of others rather than himself. When the surgeon came to him first to dress his wounds, he expressed his wish that the men should be attended to before him. The high character he had always borne as a courageous and accomplished soldier, and his invariable courteous and genial manners, had gained him the respect of all, and rendered him universally popular. In his own regiment he was beloved by all ranks.[1]

A PARALLEL MARCH.

Circumstances.

The march of another detachment in another part of the Transvaal, of nearly equal strength — the greater portion belonging to the same regiment, carried out at the same period, in very similar circumstances, with a large convoy of waggons—affords an interesting parallel to that just related, though, happily, unaccompanied by like disastrous results.

Two companies of the 94th Regiment, stationed at Wakkerstroom and Newcastle—in Natal—respectively, had been ordered, on being relieved by companies of the 58th Regiment from Natal, to concentrate at Standerton, and thence, with one company already

[1] See Appendix E.

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at the latter station, to march for Pretoria. Commanding officers had been instructed by the military authorities in Pretoria that, in the existing disturbed state of the country, they should be very circumspect in adopting every possible precaution against surprise or attack.

Details of the march.

Captain Froom, of the 94th Regiment, was in command of the military post at Wakkerstroom. On the 17th December, having been relieved the previous day by Captain Saunders with two companies of the 58th Regiment from Natal, he started with his company and a small convoy of waggons at daybreak—the same transport being used that had brought in the baggage of the relieving company. Having arrived at Meek's Farm, where a halt was made for the night, he was joined by the two companies of the 58th and 94th Regiments from Natal, also on the march to Standerton.

Boer threat delivered.

On the 18th, just prior to the three companies—252 officers and men—thus concentrated, resuming their march, Commandant J. Joubert, a relation of the Commandant-General, accompanied by Commandant Van der Schijff, who had been placed by the Boers in charge of the district, and some unarmed Boers, rode up and handed to Captain Froom a document written in Dutch, signed by Mr Van der Schijff, prohibiting, in the name of the President of the South African Republic, any military from crossing the boundary line between Natal and the Transvaal. Mr J. Joubert, in presenting this paper, informed Captain Froom, "If you proceed on the march, it will

be a declaration of war." Being pressed for a reply, Captain Froom said that he had none to give.

Large commissariat convoy from Natal joins.

Continuing his march, Captain Froom found a commissariat convoy three miles from Meek's waiting to accompany the troops, the conductor of which stated that his instructions, received in Natal, were to place the waggons in charge of the officer commanding. There were now consequently over thirty waggons, commissariat and regimental, moving with the infantry detachment; a charge, the onerous nature of which in times of disturbance only those who have had experience of transport-work in Natal and the Transvaal during the wet season can fully appreciate. A halt was made for the night at 5 P.M., two miles from Sand Spruit. The waggons were laagered, double sentries and look-outs placed. The road across the vley[1] here became exceedingly bad, it having been rendered worse through the road-parties employed in laying out a track not having completed their work.

Difficulties on the march.

On the 19th, the troops fell in before daybreak, and the column left as soon as there was sufficient light to show that the country was clear. With difficulty the waggons were passed over Sand Spruit, then halting, and laagering for breakfast. Here a messenger brought information from Standerton, from a civil source, that the Boers intended to attack the party. The march was continued with the greatest caution, the waggons being kept closed up, so that they could be quickly laagered on the first appearance

Warning from Standerton received.

[1] Swamp.

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of intended attack. When approaching a farmhouse, half a mile to the right of the road, the advanced-guard reported that armed Boers were to be seen, and with the aid of glasses a number could be made out dismounted, and their horses standing close together. It was subsequently ascertained that there were nearly a hundred men. They, however, refrained from any hostile demonstration, and the column passed on. Half an hour afterwards, though, two Boers, believed to have been spies, and to have come from the farm, came up with the troops and asked to see the officer commanding. They then asked whether any sheep had been met with; and on Captain Froom intimating that they probably wished to gain information as to his force, and the quicker they cleared off the better for them, they galloped away. Crossing the Wool-Wash, which was deep, the column reached Paarde Kop, Franklyn's, about 6 P.M., after a very fatiguing day, and laagered for the night with the same precautions as before. Boers had been noticed during the day watching the movements of the troops, and making signals from the hills.

Armed Boers watching and following the troops.

On the 20th, the column again left at daybreak. The road was found very bad, and considerable delay ensued in crossing a spruit, two and three spans of oxen being necessary for each waggon. One waggon, having broken down, had to be abandoned. Boers were seen to be still following and hovering about. A halt was made at 10 A.M. for an hour for breakfast, near a large kraal. A Boer messenger now arrived, bringing a despatch signed by Commandant-General

A Boer messenger arrives from Commandant-General Joubert.

Joubert—to the same purport as the one handed to Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther on his fatal march, the same day—warning "the Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's troops on the road to Pretoria" to stop where he was, and that any forward movement would be regarded as a declaration of war. The march was continued until 7 P.M., when, the Six Mile Spruit having been reached, dinners were cooked. The mules and oxen were much distressed; but Captain Froom decided to push on, and endeavour to enter Standerton that night. He accordingly gave instructions for everything to be in readiness to move forward again at midnight. A severe thunderstorm coming on an hour before caused some delay, and the roads were flooded and rendered very heavy. Soon after the column had moved off, a further message came from Standerton urging all possible haste, on account of information of an impending attack. The Vaal river was reached by 2.30 A.M., the 21st, and found to be fast rising and the drift difficult. In three hours, however, all the waggons had been safely passed over, and the troops had entered Standerton, in time to defend the place.

Night march.

Safe arrival at Standerton.

It was indeed well that Captain Froom accomplished his forced march of thirty miles, from Paarde Kop into Standerton, within the twenty-four hours, as he did, and did not remain for the whole night halted at the Six Mile Spruit, as the Boers thought he would. Although, from the precautions adopted throughout the march, it is not likely that his column could have been surprised, yet there can be little

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doubt that, encumbered as he was with a large convoy, his prudence in stealing away at midnight prevented his being taken at a serious disadvantage when crossing the river, and probably suffering very severe loss.

Commandant-General Joubert is said to have afterwards stated that, while a force was following in Captain Froom's track from Paarde Kop, another was actually crossing the Waterfall river, under the belief that it would be in time to join in the attack, which it was intended to make when the troops were attempting to cross the Vaal. It was also said that Commandant Van der Schijff was removed from his command for having allowed the troops to escape him.

While great credit is justly due to Captain Froom[1] for having thus brought a hazardous march to a successful termination, and contributed to avert a disaster similar to that which overtook the Lydenburg column, all his officers and men seem to have well performed their parts, and the transport-waggons were ably handled by the conductor in charge, M. F. L. Cassells[2] of the Commissariat and Transport Staff, who afterwards distinguished himself at the siege of Standerton.

[1] Captain Froom was highly commended by H.R.H. the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, for the manner in which the march was performed.

[2] Conductor Cassells was subsequently promoted to the rank of Quartermaster.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEFENCE OF PRETORIA.

Town and country around.

The mountainous nature of the country about Pretoria affords a great contrast and pleasant relief from the monotonous open highveld — undulating plains —passed over for a hundred miles when travelling thither from Standerton. Range after range of lofty hills, throwing out their spurs here and there, with narrow valleys between, form the characteristic of this district. Farmhouses, belonging almost wholly to the Boer class, surrounded by trees, with fruit-gardens and large cultivated patches, give evidence of greater fertility of soil and civilisation. Six miles from the capital the road winds between high hills, with thorn-trees and slight bush in places; but it is not until it emerges through the South Poort—a gap in the chain of hills immediately south—that the town appears in sight, with pretty and pleasing effect, less than half a mile away, situated on a gentle downward slope, its houses nestling amongst trees, and in the midst of gardens crowded with fruit-trees, and surrounded by hedges of wild roses. Its streets are

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regularly laid in rectangular style, but many plots are still vacant; and its buildings—of the usual South African ground-floor type—are much scattered, except in the central part, and spread over a space of about a mile square. The market-place, frequented by the Boers with their waggons bringing in produce for sale, with the usual Dutch Reformed Church standing in the middle, occupies the centre of the town; while another market-place, at the eastern entrance, is allotted to the natives to outspan their waggons on. The public buildings are all of a rather primitive description. The Court-house, used also as the place for the Legislative Assembly to meet in, is on one side of the central market-place. Government House, a private residence rented, lies to the right, close to the road or street, with shady verandah looking on a pretty little garden. Close by is the English cathedral, a large red-brick structure of no pretension to architecture. Water-furrows run on either side of the streets, for purposes of house supply and garden irrigation. There is a general aspect of dirt and untidiness everywhere. The streets are grass-grown, and altogether present rather the appearance of very badly kept village lanes than what their designation implies they should be.

The town is placed between two parallel chains of lofty hills, running east to west about two miles apart, whose rocky *débris* are imperfectly covered with the turf. The ground slopes gradually from the southern range to the river Aapjes, an inconsiderable stream, generally fordable in many parts, which flows

on its eastern side, and thence passes along the foot of the northern range.

Military position.

The camp ground, as it was called, to the right and left of the Heidelberg road, as it emerges from the South Poort, was the military position, commanding to some extent the town and its approaches to the east and west; but practically Pretoria was an open town, which depended almost wholly for its defence on the adequacy of the military field force available to oppose any attempted entry and occupation by an enemy. The military headquarter camp, at the time we write of, was 800 to 1000 yards to the left of the main road; while Fort Royal, a redoubt thrown up in the early part of December, lay about 400 yards to the right. The jail and Loretto House—commonly called the Convent—occupied an intermediate position on the left of the road as it entered the town.

Martial law proclaimed.

The 21st December was an eventful day in Pretoria. Before daylight—at four o'clock in the morning—it became known that the Lydenburg detachment of the 94th Regiment had been destroyed. It was at once recognised by the military authorities that they had a most determined foe—more so than had been anticipated—to deal with, and that the Boer leaders were displaying unexpected daring and ability for organisation.[1] The loss of between two and three hundred stanch soldiers—who were to have marched in to reinforce the garrison that day—very materially lessened the power to hold the extended lines, taken

[1] See Appendix F.

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up in order to include the town. The increased prestige accruing thereby to the Boer arms, and, inversely, the diminished moral influence exercised by British troops, could not but have a baneful effect with all disloyal and wavering inhabitants. Martial law was seen to be necessary. Only a firm hand, guided by a cool head, would now suffice to control and weld together, for the general defence and common good, the diverse materials of which the population was composed.

The townspeople ordered into the military camp.

By seven o'clock — after consultation between Sir Owen Lanyon, Colonel Bellairs, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, and Major Le Mesurier—the proclamation of martial law was ordered, and the removal of the inhabitants from the town to the military position on the camp ground decided on. Only so could Pretoria, with several thousands of the enemy within striking distance, be saved from liability to share a like fate to that which had befallen Potchefstroom. It was not alone that it was desirable to avoid the possibility of street fighting, in a town filled with women and children, with the attendant probability of panics arising among the untrained defenders—or that the defence itself was difficult, from the town being open and unprotected, except from the camp side, and its houses enclosed in gardens scattered over a considerable extent of ground; but that, apart from the inexperience of townspeople to take care of themselves under such trying circumstances, the people could not be wholly trusted. Many were known to sympathise with the outside party, and others to be

closely connected by family or other ties with them. The enaction of martial law, with the immediate and constant supervision of the civil population by means of concentration, was the only way of preventing such classes—a minority—favouring the rebellion, and perhaps rendering active assistance from within to the enemy. Only in that way could unity of action in the defence be obtained, and the provisions in the place be made to hold out.

Sir Owen Lanyon, in a despatch dated 23d January, thus speaks of the necessity which existed for concentrating the defence and evacuating the town: "Accordingly, martial law was proclaimed on the 21st instant throughout the province. Prior to this, preparations had already been made for the defence of the town itself; but bearing in mind the increased numbers of the rebels and the increased confidence and strength resulting from the success of their attack upon the 94th, it was judged by the military authorities that a more concentrated form of defence was advisable. The town is very open and scattered, and it would have been impossible to guard it from any sudden raid with the limited numbers at the disposal of the military. It would also have been impossible to prevent communication with the enemy on the part of the disloyal citizens save by strict surveillance; and further, there would have been great danger to the women and children in the event of a street fight." [1]

The information that the town was to be vacated

[1] See Appendix G.

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Opposition of the towns-people overcome.

soon spread. By nine o'clock an excited crowd of armed volunteers and townspeople thronged the market-square, the feeling being strongly expressed that the town ought to be held, and the determination was manifested that they would hold it even without the military.

Colonel Bellairs was at the time making arrangements in camp for the influx of townspeople about to be moved in; but word being brought to him of the ferment going on below, he rode down to the square with Sir Owen Lanyon and some others. By then the proclamation of martial law had been printed. A copy having been procured, the Administrator desired the Colonial Secretary to read it out publicly. This done, the populace were addressed by Colonel Bellairs. Assurance was given that all loyalists would be compensated for any losses they might sustain through the action of the rebels—a term the accuracy of which, as applied to the Boers, Mr Justice Kotzé, standing by, took exception to; and that the rebels themselves would hereafter be mulcted for the damages. After all, it has been John Bull who paid! As to the war, who could doubt the result? The news of the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster would raise such a feeling throughout England that 10,000 men would be despatched at once, and if that number did not suffice, another 10,000 would quickly follow, until the Transvaal was overrun from end to end, and the rebellion put down. The speaker, no doubt, fully believed in the result he foretold, and it is probable that his hearers did the same. It seemed so natural,

and at that time impossible to believe otherwise! The necessity for drawing in the lines of defence and bringing the civilians into the camp was mentioned, and the people told that the military authorities would make every possible effort to provide for their accommodation.

Lieut.-Colonel Gildea and Major Le Mesurier were then asked by Colonel Bellairs to say a few words, and give further details of the situation and proposed arrangements. Both made spirited speeches, the former requiring all capable of bearing arms to come forward for their Queen and country, and in defence of their homes, giving the option to those who objected to do so to clear out of the town forthwith. The latter enlarged effectively upon the expediency of the inhabitants withdrawing from the town, and the advantages attending a defence conducted within contracted lines, greater safety being so ensured to the women and children.

The people were gained over by the arguments set forth, and the appeals made to their patriotism. A few dissentient voices were promptly silenced; and the crowd, giving cheers for the Queen, separated in an enthusiastic mood, shortly after practically displayed, many, with their families, being seen taking the road to the camp, struggling under the weight of bedding and various household goods they were carrying, under the impression that they were required to move at once. It was with some difficulty that they were stopped. The mayor had been informed that the exodus should not commence until the following

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day, by which it was hoped that some little preparation might be effected for the accommodation of the families; but, unfortunately, all had not heard of this arrangement in time.

Effects of declaring martial law.

The effect of the declaration of martial law, coming in conjunction with the order to vacate the town, was quickly apparent. The numbers of the volunteer corps were at once nearly doubled. Men were being enrolled all day, those previously vacillating, or perhaps oscillating, between the two parties, coming forward, joined, no doubt, by many with strong Boer proclivities, but who found the times now required them to cloak their feelings. Probably few left the town when invited to do so unless they would take up arms in the defence; the uncertainty of the situation, and which side might ultimately prevail, most likely causing hesitation, and a dread of compromising themselves. Numbers, too, believed that they would not be called upon to take any active part outside, but merely behind the walls in the event of the place being attacked. Some there were, though, who still hung back from giving their services to the defence, and attempted to remain in the town. These were threatened with the terrors of the provost-marshal's interference.[1]

Commandeering carried out.

No sooner had the notification of martial law being in force gone forth, than the scene in camp and town became one of extreme bustle and activity in

[1] See Appendix H.

every direction. In camp, the troops were seen vacating their huts, pitching tents, erecting fresh shelter, and making various arrangements for the reception of the civilian families. Commissariat supplies were being collected; arms and equipment distributed to the newly enrolled men, and horses brought in for the mounted corps, now increased in strength. At the convent provisions were being stored, the walls loopholed, and the place adapted for defence. Preparations were also going on at the jail for encamping families in the yard, while the space between the two latter buildings was being turned into a camping-ground for the Pretoria Rifles, now doubled in number. The town and roads from the camps, hot and dusty to suffocation, were crowded with every available ox and mule waggon, whose native driver and forelooper had become even more excitable and noisy than usual. Fatigue-parties were engaged everywhere, loading up the *commandeered* supplies and articles deemed necessary for the defence; while staff, commissariat, and ordnance-store officers were riding about at speed, whenever the crowded thoroughfares admitted of it, issuing instructions all round.

Calculated that the state of siege might last three months.

Calculating that the state of siege might continue for three months, Colonel Bellairs had authorised the heads of the several military departments to seize horses, cattle, provisions, war-material, and any required articles forthcoming in the town, receipts being given for future payment in all cases. Assistant Commissary-General Le Mesurier was directed to be prepared ac-

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cordingly with supplies in camp, to feed both military and civilians for at least that period, and to lay in as much forage and mealies as were procurable. Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Markwick had orders to collect all arms, ammunition, powder, dynamite, &c.—Major Le Mesurier, R.E., to take such material as might be found necessary for defensive purposes, or the accommodation of the troops and townspeople.[1]

For three days the work of removing the various stores into camp went on. These seizures for the public benefit were carried out as equitably as possible; and later, when every one had settled down, valuation boards, composed of civil officials and gentlemen acquainted with marketable prices, as existing prior to hostilities, were assembled to assess the amount of compensation which was due on each claim. In this way the interests of the public were duly protected, and the claims of individuals fairly satisfied.

Messenger sent to Natal.

Night coming on—the 21st—the services of Mr Leathern, a civilian, were obtained to carry despatches to Sir George Colley. Having received his orders, he was passed through the lines, accompanied by Mr Henwood, a civil conductor attached to the transport branch, both being well mounted, and with spare horses, the fleetest combined with bottom to be found in the place, specially selected and impressed for the occasion by the Assistant Commissary-General of Transport. By making a circuitous detour eastward,

[1] See Appendix I.

they very cleverly managed to elude and distance all Boer patrols, and reach Newcastle on the 24th, when Mr Leathern despatched a telegram he had been intrusted with, the remaining papers being taken on to Pietermaritzburg.[1] Mr Leathern thus fully justified the confidence which had been placed in him, and his ability to perform a difficult and dangerous task.

The town vacated.

The following day — the 22d — the day from which the people afterwards reckoned the commencement of the siege, as it was commonly called,—the townspeople vacated their more or less comfortable homes to take up their abode in the confined spaces set apart for them; the members of the Pretoria Carbineers and Nourse's Horse remained near their horses, which were picketed on the north-west side of the camp; the Pretoria Rifles encamped on the space between the jail and the convent, part of the grounds of the latter; the small Transvaal Artillery Corps, with about forty families, were placed within the precincts of the jail; families, separated by blankets, &c., hung up, filled the soldiers' huts; other families, who had covered waggons, tents, or other means for erecting shelter of their own, and preferred that mode of living, were allowed to form a separate laager to the west of the camp, known as the Civil Laager—while a few accommodated themselves similarly in the spaces between the huts. By sundown all had obtained covering of some sort, though, in many cases, sadly inadequate as a sufficient protection from the frequent storms of

[1] See Appendix F.

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an almost tropical character which came on at this season. As time went on, the inferior accommodation was improved, and some partially built huts were completed to lessen the crowding.

All day long streams of men, women, and children continued to flow along the hot dusty roads, backwards and forwards, carrying articles of bedding, furniture, cooking utensils, clothing, &c., to their new homes. The scene could not be without its pitiful aspects. The women, of course, suffered most; some, who soon expected to become mothers, might be seen sitting by the wayside, worn out, and weeping; others dragging themselves despondingly along, with wailing infants in their arms, or frightened children clinging to their skirts. Such a sudden transition to new and unlooked-for experiences could not but have been a sore trial to most, and there were doubtless many heavy hearts in camp that night. It was at times a scene of apparently hopeless confusion, and only the marked energy and forethought of those who had the directing and controlling of the movement could have eventually evolved order from such complexity, aided as they were by the marked patience and even cheerful submission of all classes, from the wealthiest to the poorest, to the necessities imposed upon them.

Civilian appointments in camp.

The first step taken towards reducing the civil community to some kind of order was through the appointment of Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Heygate as camp quartermaster, with sundry civilians

to act under him in various capacities of supervision. The headquarter civilian cantonment was divided into four wards. Mr J. C. Preller—the first mayor, just elected, but who never formally took office—was made chief wardmaster, with the following gentlemen as wardmasters: Mr Justice Kotzé, Messrs Browne, Meintjes, M'Kenzie, and Verdoorn; and others—Messrs Dely, Hill, Rous, Swart, Van Leenhoff, Van Renen, and Zeederberg, as assistants. At the Civil Laager, Mr Fox acted as quartermaster, assisted by Messrs James, Clarke, Byerly, Redpath, and Hollard. For the Jail Laager—Dr Rutherford, the Landdrost, as quartermaster, with Mr Nixon as assistant. The following were appointed sanitary officers: Rev. J. Weavind, Chief-Justice De Wet, and Messrs Beckett, Calderwood, Keet, and Hawkins. Other gentlemen were attached to the departmental branches of the service, in such capacities as were likely to render them useful.

Volunteer corps.

The volunteer corps, owing to the pressure induced by the establishment of martial law, had been considerably strengthened as regards numbers. Horses had been pressed into the service of the mounted bodies, and the whole armed with rifles of various patterns, found in the Government ordnance store, and which, together with an old mitrailleuse, four small 4-pounder Krupp guns, and a 3-pounder Whitworth, also in the same store, had formerly belonged to the South African Republican Government.

Mounted corps.

The Pretoria Carbineers and Nourse's Horse—the

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former consisting of about one hundred and the latter of sixty horses, reduced as time went on, and the ravages of war and disease had had their effect—were most useful corps. They took the lead in all the attacks, and by their efficient daily scouting and patrolling for miles around, afforded security to the town, and gained grazing space for the cattle. Their casualties were more numerous and serious in consequence, in proportion to numbers, than other bodies —about 15 per cent. Three commanders of the Carbineers—D'Arcy, Anderson, and Sanctuary—were successively placed *hors de combat*. Captain Nourse raised the corps bearing his name; but falling sick early in the investment, he was succeeded in the command by Captain Sampson, who was wounded at the attack on Zwart Kopje.

Artillery.

The Transvaal Artillery—about a score of men, under the command of Lieutenant F. Stiemens, first clerk to the Colonial Secretary—worked a gun placed in the south-east bastion of the Jail Laager, and occasionally did service with the cattle-guards, &c.

Pretoria Rifles.

The Pretoria Rifles numbered about 400 men. The additional material was not very promising; but by dint of a few weeks' incessant drill, sharp discipline, and rifle practice—under its energetic commander, Major Le Mesurier, assisted by his adjutant, Lieutenant Cloeté, a barrister-at-law, and the company officers—the corps soon presented a respectable appearance, and took its share of hard work. The defence of the Convent Redoubt and Jail Laager was confided to it and the Transvaal Artillery. This must

have proved a most anxious charge to its commander, who had to deal with men of varied nationalities, prejudices, and opinions—many, probably, little to be trusted. The ceaseless vigilance of Major Le Mesurier in overlooking the working of the pickets and sentries, thickly thrown out in this direction at night—he rarely, it was said, resting for more than a couple of hours at a time—precluded any disaffected men being able to compass mischief. To his tact and judgment in managing a body composed of such strange elements may be ascribed the avoidance of serious outbreak. That the danger existed, a district order, issued on the 29th January, on the "serious insubordination" of one company—which led to all its officers being reduced—seems to show.[1] Another

[1] District Orders by Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District :—

"PRETORIA, 29*th Jan.* 1881.

"Serious insubordination having occurred recently in a company of a volunteer corps, when many men refused to perform a duty for which they had been detailed, presumably because they believed they had a grievance, and were worked harder than they should be,—it seems necessary to point out that no man is justified, no matter how legitimate his grievance may be, in refusing to perform duty he has been detailed for or to carry out an order given to him.

"The following extracts from the Queen's Regulations, section 5, para. 36, and the Army Discipline Act, section 43, show the mode of complaint sanctioned :—

"'The manner in which officers or soldiers should proceed to obtain redress for any grievance under which they may conceive themselves to be suffering, is prescribed in the Army Discipline Act ; but if they should desire to bring their grievances to the notice of an inspecting general officer, they are to be afforded an opportunity of doing so.'

"'If any soldier thinks himself wronged in any matter by any officer other than his captain, or by any soldier, he may complain thereof to his captain ; and if he thinks himself wronged by his captain, either in respect of his complaint not being redressed or in respect of any other matter, he may complain thereof to the general or other officer com-

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company raised a remonstrance against being detailed for exterior duty, but was promptly silenced, and informed that, though called volunteers, they were, under martial law, to do the bidding of the commanding officer, and go wherever they were required. Only one man—a brother of the Boer general commanding outside—deserted towards the close of hostilities.

Civil Guard.

Finally, there was the Civil Guard, a nondescript body of from forty to fifty men—not adapted, from various causes, for swelling the ranks of the volunteer corps. They continued throughout in a chronic state of grievance, and it was found difficult to get them to undertake even the protection of their own laager, by throwing out a few sentries at night on the west front, joining others on the right and left. They

manding the district or station where the soldier is serving; and every officer to whom a complaint is made in pursuance of this section shall cause such complaint to be inquired into, and shall, if on inquiry he is satisfied of the justice of the complaint so made, take such steps as may be necessary for giving full redress to the complainant in respect of the matter complained of.'

"The colonel commanding will always be ready to inquire into a complaint coming through the proper channel and fairly stated, and to give such redress when possible as the case may call for; but at the same time he desires to caution all that those bringing forward false accusations or statements will be punished, as provided for by the 27th section of the Army Discipline Act, viz.:—

"'Every person subject to military law who commits any of the following offences; that is to say:

"'(1.) Being an officer or soldier, makes a false accusation against any other officer or soldier, knowing such accusation to be false; or

"'(2.) Being an officer or soldier, in making a complaint where he thinks himself wronged, knowingly makes any false statement affecting the character of an officer or soldier, or knowingly and wilfully suppresses any material facts,

"'Shall on conviction by court-martial be liable to suffer imprisonment, or such less punishment as is in this Act mentioned.'"

regarded their position as too exposed, and clamoured for a special blockhouse to be built.

Native scouts.

Native scouts, both mounted and on foot, were most usefully employed, especially at night, as parties of observation to give notice of any movement threatened by the enemy, being placed out at long distances at the drifts, passes, and approaches all round.

Pay of the volunteers.

Five shillings a-day was fixed as the rate of pay for each volunteer private, in addition to rations, which latter, however, were given free to all civilians, women and children included. Those employed as artisans in skilled labour—saddlers, blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, &c.—received some further small allowances.

Hill-forts constructed.

In order to prevent any chance of the enemy occupying the hill-range to the south, which commanded the camp at rifle distance, two covered forts of rough stone, for twenty-five men and a 4-pounder Krupp gun each, were placed thereon,—one, called Fort Tully, to the east of the Poort, to command the approaches from that side, together with the stream which furnished the town and camp water-supply; and the other, Fort Commeline, to the west side, similarly to command the approaches from that quarter. They were provisioned for three weeks, and garrisoned by the Royal Scots Fusiliers. There being a good look-out for many miles—though hills intervened here and there—to the south and in other directions, these positions were also utilised as signal-stations, in communication day and night by helio-

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graphs, flags, and flashing lamps, with the camp below. The surroundings of the forts were well protected by abatis, wire entanglements, &c.; while hand-grenades, and blue-lights mounted on poles with reflectors improvised for the occasion, were kept in readiness to discover the near approach of and give an enemy a warm reception. As, from the inequalities of the ground, these forts could not sufficiently command the Poort, a blockhouse was built on the eastern side of it, for a night picket of twelve Fusiliers, and stakes with wire entanglement, removed by day, were placed across the road.

Fort Royal.

Fort Royal—occupied by a company of the 94th Regiment, with a 4-pounder Krupp gun—below Fort Tully, and between it and the town, was about 1000 yards east of the Headquarter Camp, and commanded the South Poort and east side of the town and camp ground.

The Jail Laager.

The jail was strengthened by the completion of a high wall surrounding the interior buildings, and with a bastion for a 4-pounder Krupp gun at its south-east corner. When all the available space within its walls came to be crowded with the families of the civil population, this defensive position became known as the Jail or Tronk Laager. Mr Steele, Finance and Revenue Commissioner, was appointed assistant-commandant, and supervised the arrangements of the laager and prison, until he fell seriously ill about the middle of February.

Convent Redoubt.

The Convent Redoubt, about 700 yards from the north-east corner of the Headquarter Camp, was gar-

risoned by the Pretoria Rifles and Transvaal Artillery, under Major Le Mesurier as Commandant. It may be said to have included Loretto House and the jail, with the intervening space, used as a camp, enclosed to the east and west by defensive walls joining on to the two buildings.

Headquarter Camp.

The Headquarter Camp, forming an inner line of defence, was below and to the north of Fort Commeline, overlooking the west side of the town and the Daas Poort in the north range of hill, through which the road to Rustenburg passed. The camp included—without much eye originally to defence—various commissariat and ordnance-store buildings, soldiers' huts and married quarters, officers' and sergeants' messes, canteens, stables, &c., the walls of stone, brick, or corrugated iron, and roofs generally thatched. These were grouped, as far as possible, to form several squares, with defensive walls and shelter-sheds behind them, for the defenders—the whole garrison—to take up their nightly allotted posts in.

Looking north was a salient angle with parapet and ditch—in the former of which were placed some old guns for ornament—enclosing the provost prison building, in one of the cells of which was placed several hundred pounds weight of dynamite, and a large quantity of gold-dust belonging to one of the banks. Some thirty to forty prisoners were retained here—principally old offenders, deserters, and others sentenced at an earlier period to long terms of imprisonment. A portion of the provost enclosure was filled with hospital-tents. In the adjoining enclosure,

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to the east, was placed the remaining portion of the hospital establishment in huts, marquees, and tents; the commissariat supplies and bakery; the ordnance stores; and the Royal Engineer department. Here, also, on a raised mound, was placed a small signal-gun, fired daily at noon, to give the time; and adjoining it the flag-staff, with the Union-jack flying. On the evacuation of Pretoria this staff was taken down and re-erected for several weeks in front of Brigadier-General Bellairs's office at Standerton; and when the troops finally withdrew from the Transvaal, it was put up again at Fort Amiel in Natal.

In the central or garrison square were pitched the tents of the officers of the Royal Scots Fusiliers; while their commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea, together with Mrs Gildea, who bore up so bravely, and ever showed a cheerful countenance throughout the long period of suspense, trouble, and discomfort,[1] lived in the orderly room at the north side, the garrison office-work being conducted outside under a shed. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, as next senior officer to the colonel on the staff, Colonel Bellairs, commanding the Transvaal District, was Commandant of the garrison of Pretoria, having been appointed, with the sanction of Sir George Colley, some months before hostilities—an arrangement which it was not considered necessary subsequently to disturb. Sir Owen Lanyon and Colonel Bellairs shared between them, with their offices, a portion of a hut on the east side of this square, the other portion being used as a hospital ward.

[1] This lady afterwards received the Royal Red Cross.

To the south were more huts, full of families, and the officers' mess-house, and beyond this, the transport laagers. On the west side, more families, the tents for the troops, soldiers' married quarters, stables, and the lines of the Royal Artillery and mounted corps, with some slight defences, walls or trenches, in places, and wire fencing lower down. The Civil Laager was placed to the south-west on a slope, and, some hundred yards west of that, a small Hottentot camp. An abandoned magazine building, surrounded by a ditch and parapet, on a hill 1200 yards to the west, was utilised for a mounted picket, and, together with a blockhouse in the valley to the north-west, protected that side of the position and a large cattle-kraal midway between.

Civil Laager.

The "School Plaats" natives remained at the mission station, on the northern side of the town; other natives with their masters or mistresses in camp, or in charge of their houses in town; and the rest employed with the transport laagers.

Natives.

The forced withdrawal of the inhabitants from the town to the military camps, and being there subjected to martial law, had the effect of paralysing any intentions entertained by the disaffected within of giving active assistance to those without whenever an attack should be determined on. The Boers, there is reason to believe, were completely taken by surprise at this unexpected development, and changed their plans.[1] Instead of attacking the place, when several

Boer positions.

[1] See Appendix K.

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thousands were close by available for the purpose—as no doubt was their original intention—with fair prospect of the town falling into their hands, they were now constrained to invest it by a series of laagers, placed in natural strong positions, at such distances that it might be expected, if the laagers did not altogether escape attack, they would be within supporting distance, and, by concentrating their respective forces, be able to force back and attack in turn any column venturing out so far.

The situations of the several laagers formed in the neighbourhood of Pretoria are referred to in a despatch given in the Appendix.[1] The various roads leading from the town were thus guarded, and constant communication by means of patrols kept up all round, signal-fires being lighted when necessary to indicate the locality where reinforcements were wanted. A network of observation of this description was placed round each military post, and over the whole of the Transvaal, from Zeerust and the borders of Griqualand west to Lydenburg, and from Marabastadt to Laing's Nek.

Soldiers' helmets and belts dyed.

As soon as hostilities were seen to be inevitable, the white helmets and belts of the troops were coloured with the reddish-brown clay found in the neighbourhood, so as to render them less conspicuous as marks to the enemy. This was a great improvement in appearance as well, making the men look more fitted for their vocation. It is odd that notwithstanding all

[1] See Appendix L.

the experiences gained by successive South African campaigns, showing the absurdity of a white head-dress for outpost-work, especially by night, white helmets should still have been issued for service.

The services of the bandsmen of the Royal Scots Fusiliers were further utilised in working a 7-pounder gun, in the handling of which they became very expert.

Skirmish on 28th December.

On the morning of the 28th December, a mounted patrol of 50 men having been sent, under Lieutenant O'Grady of the 94th Regiment, to reconnoitre the country from the east to the south side, met with the enemy in force, and had a brisk skirmish near the Six Mile Spruit, on the Heidelberg road. An advanced party of the volunteers, under Mr Sampson, becoming aware of the vicinity of a large body, estimated at from 300 to 400 men, quickly retired, but were pursued by 50 Boers, supported by 100 more. When about 500 yards from the spruit, the Boers dismounted and fired with effect, wounding two men and some horses. The party then halted, returned the fire, and, taking their wounded with them, continued to retire on their support, which had taken up a strong position on a rocky hill offering good cover, their flank being at the time threatened by another party of Boers. From thence their fire checked the further advance of the Boers, and caused them eventually to fall back. One of the two wounded on this occasion was Mr Norman, first clerk to the Secretary for Native Affairs, his thigh being fractured. This gentleman ultimately recovered, but remains lame for

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life. Some Boer horses were reported as being seen led back without riders.

Reconnaissance and skirmish on 29th December.

The following morning Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, taking with him the two mountain-guns, 130 mounted men, and 200 infantry, proceeded to reconnoitre the same ground where Lieutenant O'Grady's party had been engaged the previous day. Leaving a company with signallers, to keep up communication between the forts and the front, the main body crossed the Six Mile Spruit, and occupied a ridge about 3300 yards beyond, from which a few shells had previously dislodged some Boers. The latter had thereupon retreated on the Red House Laager, about 4400 yards off, where the enemy appeared to be in force. Some shells were then sent in the direction of the laager and cattle-kraal; but, finding the practice of the guns at that distance ineffective, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea moved forward 400 yards, hoping to improve his position in this respect. He, however, found he could only do so by moving further from his base than, with the force he then had with him, he would have been justified in doing, and as—detachments having been left to hold the spruit and the ridge behind—the escort remaining with the guns was insufficient. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, in his report, says: "I did not consider it advisable to advance further than I did, with the force at my disposal, taking also into consideration the position we now occupy, and the large number of the enemy in the field, and the very few soldiers we have to fall back on."

Meanwhile some commotion had been created by the shells pitched about the cattle-kraal, and the Boers were seen to be busy removing their oxen from danger. The desire to secure cattle booty seems inevitable to colonists, and has in all South African wars too often led to evil results from want of caution. This was the case now. The wish was expressed that an attempt should be made to capture the cattle.[1] Lieut.-Colonel Gildea acquiesced so far as to give the Pretoria Carbineers permission to scout forward for the purpose, though they were not to expect him to move to their support. Captain D'Arcy's troop, which was on the right, then moved rapidly towards the farmstead, when a volley from the enemy, under cover of loopholed walls to the rear of the house, brought several men and horses down. The troop fell back a little, but engaged the enemy for some minutes, until a reinforcement, under Captain Sanctuary, coming up from the left, the enemy were kept in check, and the wounded taken to the rear. Fortunately the Boer fire, after the first volley, was indifferent.

Captain D'Arcy was dangerously wounded in the foot. Although able to get about on crutches some months afterwards, bone continued to exfoliate from the wound. Three troopers were also severely wounded. One of them, Mr L. Melvill, a mere lad, son of the Surveyor-General, specially distinguished himself

[1] According to Mr Du-Val, who was present, the suggestion to capture the cattle emanated from Mr Brooks, one of the Legislative Council, who, from his previous knowledge of the country as a surveyor, was allowed to accompany Lieut.-Colonel Gildea.

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by his coolness in remaining in action to the last, although wounded and his horse shot under him, in order to assist, by his fire on the enemy, in covering the men carrying Captain D'Arcy to the rear. Three of the enemy were reported as known to have been killed.

These casualties, occurring to volunteers, caused some sensation among the civil inhabitants, and were the occasion of the local paper remarking that—"The lives of 'Our Boys' are far too valuable to be risked in attacking a miserable farm-laager, from behind which the enemy take their pot-shots at our men." Colonel Bellairs also regretted "that the too great eagerness and want of proper caution on the part of the Carbineers, should have led to some casualties which might otherwise have been avoided, and to the temporary loss of the services of such a good officer as Captain D'Arcy, and brave man as Trooper L. Melvill."

Camp Orders.

Many were the Camp Orders and Regulations promulgated with the object of bringing the heterogeneous mass of people, thus suddenly collected together, into order and discipline, and enforced with fair success.

It was notified that all persons should, weather permitting, be out of their huts or tents from 6.30 to 9.30 A.M., the interiors, in the interval, being swept, cleaned, and made tidy; and the bedding placed outside to air. No person was allowed to leave the camps except by named places for exit, and then only with a pass, signed by the Garrison Adjutant.

Such passes were signed and given out during different stated hours daily; and, before presentation, had to be countersigned by the Camp Quartermaster, to show that the applicant was not required for any duty. After 6.30 P.M. no person was permitted to enter the lines without giving the countersign. If the countersign was obtained and used unauthorisedly, or given in a loud voice, enabling others in the vicinity to hear it, the person so offending was to be arrested. There was sometimes a roll-call among the civilians, to ascertain that all had returned to camp before sunset. In case of repeated absence, remaining in town, the ration would perhaps be ordered to be stopped. No family was allowed a pass for more than one native to remain in town—to look after premises; and natives found without passes were impressed for Government services. Certificates for exemption from duty had to be signed by a military medical officer. Goats, fowls, &c., had to be kept outside the camp lines. Permits had to be obtained to keep milch cows. Special places were set apart for washing purposes, and arrangements made for men's bathing. All fires had to be extinguished by 8 P.M., and lights by 9 P.M.—though, in February, for the greater convenience of families, the time was made one hour later. At 9 P.M. the camp entrances were barricaded, and the countersign demanded of all passing from one camp inclosure or square to another.

Special attention was at all times given to efficient scavengering; and, later on, two brick furnaces were built for burning refuse.

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The satisfactory condition of the camps, and the good order prevailing throughout, elicited the following complimentary order:—

"PRETORIA, 2*d January* 1881.

"Colonel Bellairs desires to compliment Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, commanding this garrison, and the various head officers, civilian and military, upon the order, regularity, and cleanliness now reigning in the camps and positions of Pretoria.

"It was no ordinary task to remove a population of some thousands from the town to the camp; and many circumstances—such as frequent heavy storms of hail and rain, with want of sufficient shelter, and the urgent military necessity for all available labour to be employed in strengthening the defences—contributed to the difficulty and hardship. The removal could not have been so easily and quickly accomplished but for the calmness, acquiescence, and readiness shown by the townspeople themselves. A few may have made difficulties and raised complaints; but the large majority—men, women, and children—submitted without a murmur to the stern necessity forced upon them, and worked with a will, not alone in improving the scant accommodation afforded to themselves, but in extending and guarding the defences.

"Colonel Bellairs cannot but express his admiration of the conduct of the inhabitants of Pretoria in thus so cheerfully adapting themselves to their strangely altered situation, and at their submission to military rules, which cannot but be felt as irksome and even oppressive by those unaccustomed to stringent regulations, the necessity for which may not always be understood.

"Eleven days have elapsed since this exodus was effected, but owing to the attention given to sanitary arrangements, the general health is excellent, and at no time have the troops been so free from fever."

As a means of ensuring better health amongst

Camp omnibuses.

the civil community, and at the same time giving greater security to property left in the town, arrangements were made—as soon as commissariat requirements with regard to stores had been completed—for running covered mule or ox waggons, with seats inside, between the camp and town, for the convenience of women desirous of visiting their houses for a few hours, and, later on, enabling the children to attend their several schools, which then reopened. The intense heat occasionally experienced, alternating with heavy thunderstorms — often rendering the roads impassable for women and children—caused this way of locomotion, and temporary escape from camp discomforts, to be looked upon as a great boon.

Shops in the town reopen.

Such of the shops or stores as still held any goods would occasionally reopen. A volunteer would find time, in the intervals of his military duties, to rush down to the town to carry on his sales. It would be bruited about among the ladies, as quite an important piece of news, that Mr —— would be at his shop that day. The scene thereupon would be very amusing—a crowd of women of all grades waiting at the place for the door to be opened: the owner arrives dressed in civilian's clothes, but carrying his rifle, ammunition, and accoutrements. "Now you must make haste, ladies, for I'm for guard at five o'clock." Then followed the strangest shopping; every one helping herself to what she wanted, measuring it off by aid of arm and nose—the yard being, in this case, quite irrespective of varying length of limb—and the shopman taking their money with the most implicit

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reliance on their good faith. Then another citizen-soldier would exclaim as he opened his shop—"Now, ladies, don't ask me for soap, sugar, tea, rice, or flour, for these are all necessaries, and have been requisitioned by the authorities, so that your begging for them only wastes time." It was not long, though, before the acute sex discovered that sugar-candy and other sweets were not military necessaries, and that such articles might be made to sweeten their tea and coffee. One lady left quite pleased with her bargain, because she had secured the scrapings of a sugar-barrel at one shilling and sixpence the pound, the scraping probably having been done by herself.

Dutch Seminary teaching.

The mention of schools and children recalls an incident that occurred, only about a week before the commencement of hostilities, at the Dutch Seminary, the largest school in Pretoria, and at which many English children were taught. The public examinations were being held, with distribution of prizes, preparatory to the pupils breaking up for the Christmas holidays. Boys and girls exhibited their talents in various branches of learning and accomplishments —some by reciting poetry—before the audience, consisting of the Administrator, Government officials, and the parents of the children. Among them was a sturdy boy, who performed his part with zest and amid much applause. The piece selected for him—curiously enough, considering the presence of the Administrator, and that the school received a Government grant—was an ode to liberty, having reference

to the "Martyrs of Slagter's Nek,"—the victims of an incipient revolt against our rule during our early possession of the Cape — originated, oddly enough, also through the action of a Bezuidenhout—and who, ever since, have been remembered by the Boers in the light of their national heroes.

Onerous duties.

What with interior guards and exterior pickets —mounted and foot—all around by night; patrols, cattle-guards, and wood-cutting parties by day; frequent strong reconnaissances, occasional foraging expeditions, and now and then attacks on the enemy's distant laagers; the garrison—men and horses—had more than enough work,—more than commonly falls to the lot of troops in an ordinary campaign. This, too, often in great heat by day, following perhaps a night's watch through storm and rain.

The enemy kept at a distance.

The main object sought was to keep the enemy at such a distance that the cattle and transport animals —over 3000—should be secure from molestation, and have ample grazing-ground; and that no alarm or annoyance should be occasioned to the civil inhabitants, as would necessarily be the case were the enemy able to approach the town with impunity. This object was fully attained.

The enemy, in consequence, being only able to watch Pretoria from a long distance off, by laagers established in strong positions on an extended line of circumference, from six to twelve miles from the town, were obliged to keep a larger force detached for the purpose from their main body than otherwise

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might have been necessary—at no period less than 900 men, though many more at times.

Foraging expeditions.

There were many successful foraging expeditions, under various officers, to the outlying farms, from three to nine miles distant. Considerable additional supplies of sheep, forage, mealies, potatoes, &c., were thus laid in. Captain Sampson, on New Year's Eve, was able to secure five horses, about 500 sheep, and a quantity of poultry; Captain Burr, on the 5th January, returned with two horses, nine mules, and eleven waggon-loads of forage, and two of mealies; Major Le Mesurier, on the 26th January, brought in over 2000 bundles of forage, together with some mules; and other officers were similarly fortunate. These forays had to be conducted with much care and caution, to prevent surprise, or being successfully harassed on the return journey. Intermediate parties were left to hold good positions along the roads traversed, with signallers to keep up communication from front to rear, and convey information to the officer commanding the forces in Pretoria. An ambulance-waggon would accompany, together with sufficient mule-waggons to convey the infantry rapidly to the locality—the weather being generally hot and oppressive—and to return filled with supplies. Sometimes a mountain-gun would be carried on a cart or waggon, which, on arrival at the destination, would be hauled up some commanding hill, with boulders offering cover to its infantry escort, and on which the working-parties could retire if driven in by

superior force. Mounted patrols would be sent out long distances to give timely warning, or to hold passes in the vicinity through which the enemy might be expected to arrive. Vedettes, dotted about here and there, and men busy digging up potatoes, plucking mealies, gathering fruit, or loading the waggons with forage, formed altogether a pretty picture, occasionally enlivened by the approach of parties of Boers and shots exchanged with their scouts.

Captain Burr's expedition.

It was during Captain Burr's expedition in this way—to Struben's Farm, nine miles due east, on the 5th January—that one of his patrols discovered the waggon-laager at Zwart Kopje, about three miles further east; and consequent on his report, arrangements were immediately made to attack that position the following morning. Captain Burr on this occasion was about seven hours absent from camp. He had no sooner started on his return journey than his rear-guard reported 60 Boers as following, who shortly after were joined by 90 more. The dispositions made by that officer were, however, so judicious, that the enemy did not see their opportunity to attack.

Attack of 6th January.

The Zwart Kopje is a rocky knoll rising to about 30 feet, formed of large boulders, with brushwood growing between, 12 miles from Pretoria, on the Middleburg side of the Pinaar river, which flows and makes a bend round its base,—the road drift about 200 yards on one side, and Cockroft's farm-house, surrounded by trees and bushes, the same distance on the other. The laager consisted of seven

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waggons, drawn up behind, with a defending force of about 40 men; but reinforcements were available from other laagers within easy distance.

Strength of attacking force.

With a view to attacking this position and destroying the waggon-laager, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea was sent out at two o'clock on the morning of the 6th January with a force composed of one field-gun, 140 mounted men, and 280 infantry. Fifteen mule-waggons carried the latter, and it was intended that they should return filled with forage from a farm passed by; but this idea had afterwards to be abandoned, the day's work having proved longer and more fatiguing than anticipated. Following the same road as that traversed the previous day by Captain Burr, Struben's Farm was reached between five and six o'clock, shortly after sunrise, after a troublesome march in the dark, and some delay in passing the small column over soft places and boggy drifts.

Signalling-party detached.

Forty of eighty men taken of the Pretoria Rifles were left on the way to hold a hill three miles from the camp, from which it was hoped that signals could be passed into the garrison. Partly owing to defective manipulation, and partly to the heat-refraction later in the day, the heliograph messages could be only imperfectly made out. When it became known that the column was returning by a different way, and a final message came seeming to imply that the hill was surrounded by Boers, fears were entertained for the safety of the party, and Colonel Bellairs despatched the few mounted troops in camp

to render assistance. They, however, met the party returning, the Boers in their neighbourhood having retired.

Disposition of Pretoria Carbineers.

Captain Sanctuary with the Pretoria Carbineers—65 men—proceeding by another road, occupied some low kopjes to the right rear of the one about to be attacked, with the object of cutting off the enemy's retreat in that direction; while Captain Sampson, with Nourse's Horse—25 men—went on in advance of the main body to the rising ground in front of Struben's Farm, overlooking the Zwart Kopje, two miles below.

Pretoria Carbineers engaged.

The enemy had apparently received notice of the approach of the Carbineers, as, before Captain Sanctuary had time to take cover, a party of Boers were seen coming from the direction of the laager. Captain Sanctuary thereupon opened fire. His first discharge proved ineffective; but a second is said to have emptied four saddles and wounded three horses. The enemy then extended in a most orderly manner, some getting cover in a dry sluit, others behind stones. They were followed by another small party, issuing from the same direction, who rode down the valley and took up a position behind undulating ground in an easterly line. During this part of the engagement — about six o'clock — one trooper was killed and two wounded; four horses were lost owing to the man holding them being shot. At about 7.15 A.M. a party of 50 Boers were seen to be approaching from the north — Gray's Farm — and another party of the same number from the direction

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of Middleburg. Captain Sanctuary was preparing, in obedience to an order which reached him about 8 A.M., to concentrate his corps and take part in the attack on the Zwart Kopje, when, finding that a hill from which he had withdrawn a detachment of his men had immediately been occupied, and believing that a similar result would ensue from the evacuation of the position then held by himself, which prevented the enemy outflanking the attacking party, he felt it incumbent on him to remain where he was.

Disposition of the main body.

Meanwhile the main body had not halted at Struben's Farm more than ten minutes, when Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, hearing that the Carbineers were engaged, at once pushed on, throwing out the mounted infantry to protect the flanks and rear. On drawing near the Zwart Kopje a few shells were exploded over the position, though without apparent effect, the Boers keeping well under cover. Captain Dunn, with 50 men of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, was detached to hold a hill to the right. The remainder of the Fusiliers—about 100—under Lieutenant Stanuell, was then sent forward in skirmishing order to attack along the front; Lieutenant Littledale, with 10 of the Royal Engineers; Captain Sampson, with some dismounted men of Nourse's Horse; and Captain Palmer, with 30 of the Pretoria Rifles, operating in similar manner to the right, along the front of the farmhouse.

Abuse of the white flag.

After some twenty minutes' firing, and when the skirmishers were about 800 yards off the enemy's position, a white flag was raised on the kopje.

Lieut.-Colonel Gildea thereupon caused the "cease fire" to be sounded, when the Fusiliers stood up from their cover, but the Volunteers on the right still continued a desultory fire from the bushes they had worked into. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, taking with him his orderly—Lance-Corporal Burns, who spoke Dutch—rode down to the river, white flags being shown. Many of the Boers now evacuated the kopje, riding away by threes and fours. These Lieut.-Colonel Gildea endeavoured to stop by despatching three scouts "to tell them they must not go while their flag of truce was flying." The men were, however, fired upon. The orderly, in the meantime, having crossed the drift, and to within hailing distance, called out to some Boers in his front to come down to the river, as the officer in command was there waiting for them. The only response was a volley at himself, and two shots, followed by others, at the Lieutenant-Colonel. Fire being reopened by the Fusiliers, they advanced to within 300 yards of the position, and then held the bank of the river. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, having reinforced the Royal Engineers and Volunteers on the right with a few men of the Fusiliers, directed the whole to turn the left of the kopje. This having been well effected by Lieutenant Littledale, and the others with him, the bugle sounded the "charge" to the Fusilier line. Owing to the precipitous nature of the banks of the river in places, Lieutenant Stanuell was compelled to send the right half of the company in charge of Colour-Sergeant Hardwick, while he himself took the

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left half. When within 100 yards of the kopje, he found only four men alongside him—apparently owing to the difficulties encountered, and two of his party having been killed and several wounded. He therefore took advantage of some cover, and continued firing. Then for a minute a white flag was raised on the kopje, but no sooner did Lieutenant Stanuell show himself than he was fired at. Finally, the Boers seeing themselves being surrounded, and having no horses to escape on, again hoisted and kept up the white flag. The "cease firing" was sounded, and soon after, upon being called to come down, they gave themselves up. The attack, from the firing of the first shell, had lasted an hour.

Prisoners taken.

Seventeen prisoners were taken—one of whom, mortally wounded, died before he could be removed, and another on the road. Of the remaining fifteen, the commandant—Hans Botha—was dangerously wounded by shell and rifle-balls in four or five places. He remained for weeks in a precarious condition in the camp hospital; but before the end of the investment was cured, and able to return to his home—to testify to the care and skill of the English surgeons, who had brought him out of the very "jaws of death," aided not a little by a marvellous constitution of his own.

Two of the Boer waggons with their oxen were utilised to carry away the prisoners and the arms and ammunition found. The rifles were principally of the Westley-Richards pattern. Two cartridge-bags of the 94th Regiment—taken in all probability at

Bronkhorst Spruit—were discovered, one on a mortally wounded Boer. The remaining five waggons were blown up and destroyed.

Return of the column.

The wounded having been attended to and placed in the ambulances, the column started about nine o'clock on its return journey, which was not accomplished without difficulty and delay, the ox-waggons and ambulances travelling very slowly; and another Boer reinforcement—estimated at 150 men—which arrived at this period from the direction of the Red House Laager—cutting the line of communication with Pretoria—rendering great caution necessary.

The Carbineers, who, before rejoining the column, received some shots from the Boers arriving from the eastward, now again came into action, while protecting the left flank and skirmishing with the enemy, who were firing from rocky ground near Struben's Farm. One man was mortally wounded.

The object of the enemy was now seen to be to occupy the rocky ridges flanking the road, and the passes through which the column had originally advanced. Batches of Boers appeared galloping for the different positions, from which they would be able to harass the retiring line of troops and waggons with fatal effect. Fortunately, by making a detour to the right across the veld, and returning to camp by another road, which did not offer the same facilities for attack, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea was able to frustrate their intention. In this way—moving the waggons three abreast when possible, and showing a front to the enemy where bad drifts occurred—the column

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escaped further serious molestation, though much fatigued, having been thirteen hours under arms with exposure to a hot sun.

British losses.

During the engagement, six men—three Fusiliers and three Carbineers—were either killed or mortally wounded, and thirteen others wounded, only two of which were slight cases. The improper use made of the white flag,[1] probably arising from a difference of opinion as to yielding, may have caused more casualties than otherwise would have resulted; but it was during the final charge, when less than twenty of the enemy were left, that most occurred.

Captain Sampson was seriously wounded in the neck and shoulder whilst gallantly leading on his men. He was carried out of action and across the river, under heavy fire, by Lance-Corporal Hampton, who had just before been conspicuous for the way in which he headed his small party of Fusiliers detached to

[1] District Order by Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District:—

"PRETORIA, *9th January* 1881.

"During the action of the 6th inst. a white flag of truce was hoisted from the position occupied by the rebels. The officer commanding the troops consequently ordered the cease-firing, and sent forward two white flags from different points in response. The rebels then deliberately re-opened fire on the officers carrying the flags and on our men, who, having risen from cover, had exposed themselves. The casualties which occurred to the 2-21st Regiment that day arose solely from this treacherous conduct.

"In order to protect the troops against a recurrence of loss of life from such savage proceedings, it becomes necessary to direct that, whenever a flag of truce is displayed from a rebel position, no one from our side should advance to meet it until it has come, unaccompanied by any armed body, close to our line. The troops will be careful to keep under cover on such occasion, although the cease-firing may have sounded, until the officer commanding directs them to rise."

reinforce the right. Colour-Sergeant Hardwick was slightly wounded when moving forward in command of the right half-company of the Fusiliers; while Lieutenant Stanuell, although he frequently exposed himself with marked coolness, escaped—his water-bottle, however, receiving two bullets, and his sword-scabbard being indented by another. Colour-Sergeant Finch—who had nearly completed twenty-one years' service—was killed in the final advance of the Fusilier line.

The enemy's losses.

A high estimate was formed at the time of the enemy's losses; but besides that of the fifteen prisoners, only five men were known positively, by their bodies having been seen, to have been killed. Many saddles were reported to have been "emptied"; but as the Boer, in order to fire, drops quickly off his saddle under cover, it may be suspected that errors in calculation were made through taking appearance for fact.

An example was made of a man of the Pretoria Rifles for misbehaviour before the enemy, by sending him before a court-martial, when he was sentenced to dismissal, and degraded to the performance of menial work.

Bronkhorst Spruit wounded.

One of the ambulance-waggons which had been sent out to Bronkhorst Spruit on the 21st returned on the 27th December, bringing eight of the less seriously wounded men of the 94th Regiment, together with reports and lists of the killed and wounded. Surgeon-Major Comerford had remained behind to render assistance in the numerous dangerous cases, many of

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which required amputation, and did not come in until the 6th January, the same day that the Zwart Kopje Laager was attacked. Owing to this coincidence, the Surgeon-Major was suspected by the Boers—of course wrongfully—of having when passing given useful information regarding the position of the laager, and further communication with the Bronkhorst Spruit party was not permitted. It was gratifying, however, to learn that the men were fairly treated and tolerably well supplied with provisions—extras, such as milk, eggs, fowls, &c., which could be procured on the adjoining farms, being sold to them. Now and then some little information would come in about them. Two messages were received asking for medicines of particular kinds. The first package sent never reached, it having, it was believed, been appropriated on its way, to relieve the wants of some sick or wounded Boers.

Funerals.

Military funerals were conducted with somewhat less than the honours customary in peace-time. A little while before, two officers — Lieut.-Colonel Hazlerigg and Lieutenant Justice—of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, who had died of enteric fever, were buried with great ceremony, the whole garrison, with many of the Government officials and townspeople, following their remains through the town to the cathedral, and thence to the cemetery. Such occasional impressive displays very likely serve a purpose; but their frequency during a state of siege would certainly have been out of place, when the object should rather be to raise than depress

the spirits of the inhabitants. Even as it was—dispensing with the beautiful but sad slow "Dead March" from the band, and the rattle of musketry volleys over the grave—the sight of the funeral *cortège* winding its way down from the camp to the cemetery, about three-quarters of a mile below, with the sad wail—now high, then low—from the bagpipes, as the procession neared its destination, was no doubt depressing enough to many watchers who remained behind, as well as those who accompanied the funeral.

Cemetery.

The town cemetery, adjoining which was an allotment for the garrison, is situated on the flat ground to the west of the town — a desolate, dirty-looking locality, surrounded by brick-kilns, and endangered during the wet season by water-courses. During the investment it was found necessary to enlarge the military portion, and surround it with a more substantial wall; but although left in good order when the troops withdrew, it is to be feared that, from the nature of the soil and surroundings, the place will soon fall into ruin, unless the town authorities find themselves in a position to take charge of the whole cemetery, and expend money in improving it by drainage and planting.

Natives.

There were a considerable number of natives in the town and camp—between 1300 and 1400 drawing rations — a large portion of whom were located at the mission station, a separate cantonment in the lower part of the town, and the remainder were employed by the Commissariat and Transport Depart-

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ment, or as servants, &c., by the civilians. The natives belonging to the place were generally inferior in *physique* and intelligence to the town natives met with in Natal, but were tractable, and, considering the opportunities afforded in a deserted town, not so much given to pilfering as might have been expected. Indeed we heard of cases in which articles of value lost, having been found by natives, were restored to the owners; whilst property left in their charge in vacated houses was usually carefully looked after.

The natives not already in the employment of the Commissariat or as servants—one to each family—were formed into labour corps, composed of a medley of Zulus, Swazis, Portugee-men from Delagoa Bay, and a majority of Tongas, ably organised by Assistant Commissary-General Walton—who, from his acquaintance with the Zulu language and the customs of the natives, exercised considerable influence over these men—and sent out daily to carry out different necessary works—improving the water-supply, manufacturing *biltong*, or fuel, scavengering, &c.,—while some were utilised as scouts, to give warning of any attempt to enter or leave the town or lines by night. By day the latter would sometimes be mounted on mules, trained for this purpose, when action and disease had seriously diminished the number of horses. In order to protect the natives from any disposition to molest or abuse them, a military notice was early published, that—"Any soldier, volunteer, or civilian found ill-treating or threatening any native, will be immediately arrested and handed over to the provost-marshal, and be dealt

with accordingly." The words, "be dealt with accordingly," were somewhat indefinite, but probably on that account all the more impressive. In point of fact though, cases arising with natives not in military pay, were handed over to the Landdrost for disposal in the usual way in his court.

Commissariat supplies.

Through the foresight shown in the timely seizure of all supplies,[1] and precaution in placing the whole population on regular daily rations,[2] waste and want were prevented, and every man, woman, and child received sufficient food until the 14th March, when, owing to the uncertainty still prevailing as to when relief might arrive, it was deemed prudent to reduce the scale of the men's ration, though the women's and children's were continued the same as before.

Bread was at first baked in the town, at the contractor's ovens; but, later on, a very successful bakery was erected by the Royal Engineers in the camp, and good bread was turned out by the Commissariat. Biscuit and preserved meats were issued twice a-week. These supplies had, in part, been a long time in hand — surplus stock of previous campaigns — and had undergone great exposure and knocking about in transit, with the result that much of the biscuit was "weevilly," and about one-sixth of the tinned meat unfit for consumption.

At the beginning of February a market was started in the camp for the sale of vegetables, fruit, &c., at regulated prices.

[1] See Appendix M. [2] See Appendix N.

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Water-supply.

The town was supplied with water from the stream below and to the east of the camp ground, sluits, or deep furrows, having been cut to divert the water to either side of the streets. The camp had water similarly conveyed to it; but as it was impossible to prevent such open sluits from becoming in some degree defiled at times, this water was only allowed to be used for washing purposes, and water-carts supplied all required for drinking or cooking. The carts, drawn by oxen, were filled at the stream itself, about a mile off, non-commissioned officers and soldiers being detailed to accompany them, and ensure all orders being carried out by the native drivers, and the proper delivery of the water, otherwise the natives would have been apt to fill the barrels at nearer, and, to them, more convenient spots. All this was in itself, for such a large number of people, no inconsiderable labour; but there is no doubt it contributed largely to the good health enjoyed throughout by the community. Mounted patrols were regularly sent for some distance along the banks of the stream, to see that no dead or dying oxen or other animals were near to pollute the water.

Conservation of water.

In view of the time when the rainfall would lessen, steps were taken for the conservation of waste water, by the construction of dams and reservoirs in the valley near the cattle-kraal, to the west of the camp. By the end of February, Captain Churchill, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, and Mr Maben, C.E., had between them, with the aid of native labour, stored a large quantity of water, which proved most useful

for horses and cattle, while the works also served the purpose of rendering the ground in that neighbourhood of the camp less marshy and unhealthy.

Slaughter-cattle.

The slaughter-cattle numbered about 1600 originally. They were herded at night in a kraal 500 yards below the camp. The spot had been set aside some months before for soldiers' gardens—a plot for each corps—to give the men some occupation and amusement. There being already a ditch with wire-fencing round, the place was at once selected to suit the sudden emergency and necessity for kraaling the oxen, and a civilian was placed in charge as poundmaster, with natives to assist him. On the night of the 4th January the camp was disturbed by a stampede of the oxen broken loose from the kraal. The pickets failed to arrest the onward course of the animals in the dark, and the following morning disclosed a loss of about seventy oxen. An examination of the wire-fencing showed that it had been tampered with, and deliberately cut in several places, proving that traitors had been at work. The poundmaster was arrested by the deputy provost-marshal; but although there were suspicious circumstances, sufficient evidence was not forthcoming to establish a case against him or others. A change in supervision was made, and as soon as time admitted, a brick wall was built round the kraal to render it more secure. On an average about fifteen oxen were slaughtered daily. About 180 transport and slaughter oxen died from disease during the investment.

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Food for horses and cattle.

The difficulty of providing food for such large numbers of horses, transport-oxen and mules, and slaughter-oxen—altogether not far short of 3000 animals at the commencement — was very great, and became a source of constant anxiety, so much depending upon the ability to keep them in good condition. Without a sufficiency of fresh meat, the health of the population would soon have suffered. It was therefore essential that the cattle should have ample grazing-ground,—which in the Transvaal means runs over a very much greater extent than would be wanted in England,—and under efficient protection. This could be ensured only through the horses of the mounted force being kept in a fit condition for the extensive scouting and patrolling work required of them. A collapse in horse-power would at once have enabled the enemy to close in upon the place, and, while endangering the safety of the town, have resulted in the loss of the cattle through raids, starvation, or disease.

In misty or wet weather, when it was necessary to draw in the vedettes, the cattle had to be restricted to the immediate vicinity of the camp, where little or no grazing was left. Only a few of the horses could be allowed to graze at a time, the rest being already out patrolling or required as a reserve.

Haymaking.

The desirability of supplementing the forage-supplies on hand, by cutting grass and making hay, soon impressed itself upon the military au-

thorities; and it being discovered that there were several mowing-machines available in the merchants' stores, they were quickly *commandeered* and set to work.

Capture of a mowing-machine by the enemy.

The first machine was started under the superintendence of a head of a Government department, who had been attached to the Commissariat; but that gentleman's zeal to secure a good cut one day—the 11th January—outran his discretion, leading him to go too far afield—down the valley towards Elandsfontein—without first obtaining protecting armed co-operation. The Boers seeing him a fair prey, first sent some men to engage the attention of a small look-out party of the Pretoria Carbineers posted on a distant flanking hill, and then swooped down on the mowing-machine, the superintendent only having time to mount the reaper behind him on his English horse, and gallop off. The mowing-machine was disabled and left on the ground, about three miles from the camp; but the mules were carried off. Sergeant Levy, who was in command of the party of Carbineers, was wounded in the hand; a corporal temporarily maimed by a kick from his horse; and two horses were lost.

This experience led to orders being given that the mowing-machines should only work under special protection, or in the immediate neighbourhood of the large cattle-guard which always went out when the cattle grazed any distance off. This generally consisted of about half a company of infantry, with a 7-pounder gun, under an officer, perched on some

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commanding rise or hill, and an officer's mounted patrol with vedettes thrown out.

The machines were worked under great difficulties, owing to the excessively stony nature of the country around; and often came in disabled before a day's work could be got out of them. As soon as cut, the grass was carted into the camp, made into hay, and stacked.

Attack of the 16th January.

The loss of the mowing-machine, waggon, and mules, captured by Boers supposed to have come from a laager at Elandsfontein Farm, caused more attention to be given to that quarter, and observations were made with a view to attacking the position. The precise situation of the waggon-laager was imperfectly known, it being placed in a kloof below a ridge or spur of the Magaliesberg range, ten miles due west from the camp, where it could not easily be overlooked until the ridge was gained. The left extremity of the latter being, however, fortified with two stone laagers or walled-in defences and some schanzes, gave indications of its probable whereabouts. On the 16th January, a reconnaissance in force was made, with the intention of ascertaining more about it, and effecting its destruction should the opportunity be found favourable for that purpose.

Strength of the column.

The column left at four o'clock in the morning, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea proceeding in command; Colonel Bellairs—not wishing to remain long absent from the place — intending to leave later on. It consisted as follows: Two field-guns; one mountain-

gun, carried on a cart; 170 mounted men—45 of mounted infantry, 65 of Pretoria Carbineers, and 60 of Nourse's Horse; and 300 foot,—120 of Royal Scots Fusiliers, 30 of 94th Regiment, and 150 of Pretoria Rifles—the latter being conveyed on fifteen mule-waggons.

Diversion made by explosions.

Lieutenant Littledale with a few sappers had been sent in a contrary direction, some miles due east, towards Middleburg, to explode some dynamite, and —by giving rise to an impression that we were attacking in that quarter—create a diversion, and draw some of the enemy to that side. The explosions took place about six o'clock, when the column had arrived about half the way, and, as was subsequently ascertained, were successful in their object, parties of Boers having been attracted to that locality from the Red House and other laagers.

Disposition of the force.

Fifty of the Pretoria Rifles were detached to hold a hill to the left, about three miles out, which commanded the Quagga Poort. Nourse's Horse scouted to the right, and the Pretoria Carbineers to the left front. On nearing the ridge, the enemy was observed in occupation, and to have lighted a signal-fire. Nourse's Horse were then ordered to move on the opposite end of the ridge to where the stone defences were, and the Carbineers to a hill about 2000 yards to the left, from whence, it was thought, any reinforcements arriving might be driven off. Leaving the remainder of the Pretoria Rifles on a rocky rise, as a reserve, with the waggons laagered, the Fusiliers were thrown forward in skirmishing order, and the 9-

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pounder guns brought into action. Meanwhile, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, reconnoitring on foot, from some rising ground to his left front, was able to make out the laager. Finding it a particularly strong one—a blockhouse in front, with loopholed wall and schanzes around—he came to the conclusion that the only place to take it from, without great loss of life, would be the ridge,—where Nourse's Horse, under Lieutenant Glyn—their horses left under cover—were already busily engaged in dislodging the enemy from rock to rock. While Lieut.-Colonel Gildea was thus reconnoitring, Colonel Bellairs, who had galloped out with an escort of half-a-dozen Carbineers, reached the scene of action; but on meeting Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, he desired that officer to continue in command and carry out his intended movements,—to send the mountain-gun and rocket apparatus, with 50 of the Fusiliers, to support Nourse's Horse, and drive the enemy off the ridge.

Progress of the attack.

Meantime the skirmishers—the Fusiliers along the base of the ridge, and the 94th scouts thrown out to the left—were hotly engaged; the guns were dropping shells about the stone laagers and schanzes on the ridge, though by no means successfully; and the men of Nourse's Horse were vigorously forcing the Boers back, until, finally, they had driven them into the rear stone laager, though many of them still hung under cover over the rise. It seemed now as if, with the support of the mountain-gun and infantry on the ridge, success was likely to crown our efforts, and that the position and laager below would be

taken; but first, difficulty and delay were experienced in dismounting and hauling the gun up the ridge, and then Boer reinforcements appeared in sight, streaming over the Nek to the south, and thus turning our left. Unfortunately, too, through some misconception, the Carbineers had been withdrawn from the crest to the bottom of the hill, which they had been sent to occupy on the left, and from which they might have been useful in disputing or delaying the advance of the enemy's reinforcements. The error was noticed by Colonel Bellairs, but could not be rectified in time to be of any service.[1] Boers—perhaps 200—came filing over the Nek, and then came another large party. As they reached the valley below, finding they would have to cross an intervening flat, exposed to artillery-fire, before they could gain cover from further rising ground, they started of at speed, scattering themselves far and wide. In vain were shells sent after them; they appeared to produce little or no effect. Indeed the artillery practice throughout the day had been bad; and Lieut.-Colonel Gildea afterwards reported that, "had it been what it ought to have been, he would have had possession of the ridge before the enemy's

Boer reinforcements arrive.

[1] Lieut.-Colonel Gildea in his published report says, with regard to this incident: "I had already ascended the hill, and had the 7-pounder gun dismounted, when I saw the enemy in force coming over a range of hills to the left rear. Had Captain Sanctuary held this hill, as he might have done, the enemy's movement in this direction would have been checked. It is true, Captain Sanctuary got orders from me to reinforce the 94th scouts to the front, who were hotly engaged; but seeing the enemy turning our flank, he might, under the altered circumstances, have used his own discretion, and reoccupied the hill he had just left."

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reinforcements arrived." Later on, when Mr Hendrick Schoeman, Assistant-General of the district around Pretoria, was allowed into camp, under a flag of truce, he told of the dance these reinforcements had been led, through the ruse of Lieutenant Littledale's explosions to the east, and the delay which ensued in retracing their steps and reaching Elandsfontein, when they at last discovered where the real attack was proceeding. And when, the war concluded, the Boer commander of the laager came into Pretoria, he mentioned to some that, but for the timely arrival of the reinforcements, he was so hard pressed that the position must have been taken and the waggon-laager broken up.

Circumstances leading to withdrawal.

The effect on the enemy on the ridge, when they saw their supports at hand, was soon perceptible, in greater boldness in showing themselves and renewed vigour in action. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, on seeing their approach, descended the ridge, whither he had gone to superintend the movement of the intended support — the mountain-gun and 50 Fusiliers — to Nourse's Horse; and considering that, in the altered circumstances, it would not be advisable to continue any further forward operation, he proposed that the column should be withdrawn. Colonel Bellairs acquiesced in this prudent course, it being then obvious that the time had gone by—the attack not having been developed in time—to admit of any final successful assault being made before the Boer reinforcements came up; and that the prolongation of the attack would now only entail the loss of many men

without compensating results.[1] The Artillery and Fusiliers were accordingly directed to fall back on the reserve—Pretoria Rifles — which had remained posted on the rocky rise in rear,—where many a package of cartridges was discovered by the Boers, as they afterwards asserted, hidden behind stones,

[1] Lieut.-Colonel Gildea in his report says :—

"The Colonel Commanding agreeing with me that it would not be advisable to continue the advance, I ordered all the forces to assemble on the kopje where my supports were—which was effected without difficulty.

"Finding there was one of the 94th mounted infantry and two of the 21st Fusiliers missing, I made preparations to go back over the ground we had evacuated to find them ; but being informed that the enemy had been seen carrying them away, I did not carry out my intention."

And Colonel Bellairs added : "Lieut.-Colonel Gildea exercised a sound discretion in withdrawing at the time he did, when, from the rebels having been reinforced by several hundred Boers coming up on our left flank, it would have been difficult to have dislodged the enemy from the final stronghold held without greater losses than warranted. The troops, besides, had been already eight hours under arms."

Mr Du-Val, in his jauntily written book, 'With a Show in Southern Africa,' is in error, when—in his chapter giving an account of the Elandsfontein attack—he implies that, but for the arrival of Colonel Bellairs during the operations, and his giving "a very pronounced opinion that the game of taking the remnant of the ridge was not worth the risk to life it would entail," the attacking party would not have been withdrawn, and would have eventually achieved the success they merited.

Now Colonel Bellairs had reached the scene of action earlier than Mr Du-Val represents, or seems to have been aware of—certainly some time before the Boer reinforcements, which led to the withdrawal, first showed themselves—and had been quietly noting the progress of the attack, when Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, coming up to report himself, was requested to continue in command and make his own dispositions. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea then proposed to accelerate the attack by sending the 7-pounder gun and rocket apparatus up the ridge to the assistance of Nourse's Horse. Colonel Bellairs agreed in the desirability of this action.

Some time, however, elapsed in the endeavour to give effect to this

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and intentionally left for them by some of their friends in the midst of us!

The withdrawal of the skirmishers was quickly followed up by the enemy; and the mountain-gun, worked by bandsmen of the Fusiliers, was then brought into action, to assist in checking their advance. It was now found that two of the Fusiliers

plan; when, suddenly, the enemy's reinforcements appearing, crossing the range to the south, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea was induced to pause, descend the ridge which he had climbed, and seek Colonel Bellairs. On meeting him he at once suggested that, under the changed circumstances, the troops should withdraw. Colonel Bellairs acquiesced in the prudence of this proposal.

Another interval ensued, during which the Fusilier skirmishers had fallen back. Colonel Bellairs was with an ambulance-waggon, which had moved to the front, seeing to some wounded men, when Lieut.-Colonel Gildea reported to him that two of his men had, by some extraordinary mischance, remained in front when the rest of the skirmishers retired, and were now missing. The question arose as to whether, on the chance of recovering them, the force should retrace its steps and return to the attack. It was, however, clear that the absence of the men had not been discovered or reported until too late for any effective rescue to be made, and that they must have already—as reported to have been seen—fallen into the hands of the enemy; also, that a renewal of the attack, after the advantages previously gained had been already given up, could only be carried out with greatly diminished prospect of success. It was at this period that Colonel Bellairs, conversing with Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, expressed "a very pronounced opinion"—apparently overheard by Mr Du-Val—to the effect that the value of such attacks was questionable,—"the game not worth the candle."

The reports quoted above, made at the time by Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, show that the action taken by that officer was wholly in agreement with Colonel Bellairs. Of course it is open to Mr Du-Val, or any one else, to form his own opinion as to whether success would have been likely to have attended a continuance of the attack after the Boer reinforcements had arrived; but it may be reasonably supposed that the two senior officers, responsible for the situation and the safety of the force, knew something of their business, and would not have withdrawn without sufficient cause, and it being the most judicious course to follow.

and a 94th mounted man were missing. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea was inclined to advance again over the ground to find and bring them in; but this intention was abandoned, when it was ascertained that the men must have fallen into the hands of the enemy —the information received at the time pointing to that conclusion.

Gallant conduct of two men.

The two Fusiliers would appear to have been on the extreme left of the skirmishing line, and, in the din of action, not to have noticed that the remainder of their comrades had retired, when some Boers from the reinforcements, coming up unobserved on their flank, fired at and wounded both—one mortally.

This gave occasion to a display of great gallantry on the part of two men—Lance-Corporal James Murray of the mounted troop, 94th Regiment, and Trooper Thomas Danaher of Nourse's Horse, but since of the 94th Regiment—whose deeds gained for them the following distinguished mention of their names by Colonel Bellairs at the time, and subsequently the award of the Victoria Cross: "The gallant act performed by Trooper Danaher of Nourse's Horse, and Lance-Corporal Murray of the mounted troop, 94th Regiment, who, under a heavy fire, dashed forward to rescue a wounded man of the 2d battalion 21st Regiment, who had fallen when the skirmishers were retiring, deserves distinguished mention. Corporal Murray, in this endeavour, fell severely wounded into the hands of the enemy, but was sent in under a flag of truce the following day." Danaher did not quit Murray until told by the latter

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to do so, and seeing that he could not save him; he then fired some parting shots, and escaped unhurt, notwithstanding the heavy fire.

Return of the column.

At about eleven o'clock the column commenced its return journey, the infantry, in the waggons, following the road, as soon as it was reached from off the long grass; while the guns, keeping to the higher ground, retired alternately, rapidly from position to position, one gun always remaining in action to cover the other. Colonel Bellairs, fearing a possible rush to capture them, remained with them, directing their movements. The Carbineers and mounted infantry protected the right and rear, and Nourse's Horse the left. The Boers followed until within three miles of the camp, hanging on the flanks and rear, and keeping up a running fight the whole time; racing to gain possession of a kopje or position from which they might be able to harass the retiring column in flank, but frustrated by the celerity with which they were forestalled by Lieutenant Glyn with Nourse's Horse. Though kept at long range by the excellent stand made by the mounted troops, under cover of successive positions, and occasional shells directed against them, the Boers were able to exhibit to advantage their fine qualifications as mounted skirmishers, and capacity for selecting cover. The withdrawal of troops under fire of a pursuing enemy is at all times difficult; but was probably more than usually so on this occasion, the Boers hovering all round, and showing marked ability to seize any opportunity offering for attacking to advantage. Altogether the

affair was a very interesting sight, both sides deserving credit for the fight on Elandsfontein Ridge, and the pretty skirmishing along the valley afterwards. The troops had been six hours under fire, and only got back to camp about three o'clock, having been nearly twelve hours under arms. Nourse's Horse received high praise, Colonel Bellairs remarking that "the way in which Nourse's Horse engaged the rebels during the attack on their strong position, and subsequently selected and defended ground to cover the withdrawal, specially attracted my attention, and merits high commendation." CHAP. III.

The enemy's losses were unknown, otherwise than from native reports, which could not be relied upon, though it was ascertained that the commandant of the laager, Mr Henning Pretorius, was one of their wounded. An offer having been made to allow the two wounded men we had lost on the field to come in, an ambulance, accompanied by Dr Dyer, a civil surgeon, who spoke Dutch, was sent out the following day for them. Dr Dyer was not allowed to approach the laager, and found the Boers very reticent, even refusing his offer of surgical assistance to their wounded. Our losses were two killed and eight wounded, all dangerously or severely, and seventeen horses killed or wounded. Sergeant Fitz-Clements of Nourse's Horse, a Swiss, captured four of the enemy's horses. Losses.

The column was returning from this engagement, and the last shots had just been fired, when guns were heard in the direction of the forts to the west The town threatened by another party of the enemy.

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of the camp. Colonel Bellairs at once galloped back to the camp, where he found some excitement existing, the women and children having been hastily ordered into the huts and places of shelter, on account of anticipated attack, and all available mounted men, including the Administrator with some of the Government officials, having gone out to oppose a party of Boers who had approached the town on its western side. It appeared that the latter were about sixty in number, and had shot some cattle grazing on Mr Mear's farm, on the other side of the river, at the same time sending a bullet through Mr Mear's hat, as he was standing in the verandah of his house. On being discovered from the forts, and coming within range, the Krupp 4-pounder guns opened, for the first time during the investment; and a shell from Fort Royal falling in their midst—two men, it was said, being struck—they quickly retired, the party of mounted infantry sent out being only able to reach the ground in time to exchange a few long-range shots with them—one of our horses being, however, wounded. The Jail Bastion gun was also brought to bear on a supposed enemy—a small group of men without distinguishing military dress—when luckily, just in time, it was, with the aid of glasses, rightly conjectured that, instead of Boers, they might be Sir Owen Lanyon and some members of his Executive Council.

Relief of Potchefstroom

The practicability of relieving the Potchefstroom garrison from Pretoria had been again mooted, but the

project was now reluctantly and finally abandoned, it being recognised as too hazardous for any such body of troops as were available to be detailed for the purpose, while at the same time imperilling the safety of the capital through withdrawal of the regular troops and mounted men to form the column. The experiences gained by the Elandsfontein affair had shown how capable the Boer could be in the art of harassing troops on a march encumbered with supply-waggons; and that any such mounted body as could be sent out from Pretoria would be wholly insufficient to effectually keep off so active and mobile an enemy, who could soon assemble from 1000 to 2000 men to dispute the way. A daily running fight would have had to be maintained for over two hundred miles, there and back, the enemy having to be driven out of advantageous and naturally defensive positions ahead, which would invariably have been found preoccupied.[1]

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finally abandoned.

[1] From Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the Administrator, Transvaal.

"PRETORIA, *January* 17, 1881.

"SIR,—I wish to report for your Excellency's information, that the recent encounters with rebel Boers, particularly those which took place in the neighbourhood of Pretoria on the 6th and 16th instant, appear to demonstrate the impracticability of success being achieved in the direction of relieving Potchefstroom by the despatch of any such small field-column as could be spared from Pretoria.

"Composed as such a force would necessarily be of infantry mainly, it may be doubted whether it would be able to maintain a running fight for several days for over 100 miles—or reach its destination otherwise than in such a crippled state as to render its return impossible—with a tenacious foe, such as the rebel Boers have up to the present proved themselves to be,—born hunters, taking every advantage of ground and cover, knowing the country well, and hanging on our flanks and rear. The infantry and few mounted men with the column could not at all times keep the wholly mounted enemy beyond rifle-shot of the guns

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There were four civil medical practitioners, one of whom acted as the district surgeon. A project had latterly been on foot to establish a small civil hospital, but hostilities intervening had prevented its being carried out. In case of any serious

and waggons; and the inevitable result would be that the artillery horses would be shot, and the transport of necessary supplies of provisions and ammunition impeded.

"I am fully borne out in this opinion by Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea, my second in command—an officer known for his enterprise and daring, and who would be the first to advocate and ask to lead any feasible expedition.

"Were a field-column to be sent out, otherwise than for a short distance, all her Majesty's troops would have to be withdrawn for the purpose. This would necessitate handing over the defence of the camp and place wholly to the townspeople, and the drawing in of the lines—certainly giving up the jail and convent positions. This action would, I conceive, be fraught with danger; and were any reverse to happen to the field-column—which, as I have already remarked, I consider but too probable—would no doubt lead to Pretoria being attacked in force.

"If the rebels continue to fight as they have begun—and I see no indication at present of their losing heart or withdrawing—the only means of effectually contending against them and re-establishing communications with Natal and the different out-stations, will be by the timely arrival of cavalry reinforcements, say 1000 men, from England or India.

"I would therefore advise your Excellency to take the earliest, most direct, and quickest way of fully informing the Home Government of the present critical military situation in this province, and the urgent necessity which exists for the despatch of cavalry reinforcements.

"During the last four weeks despatches and messages have been sent to Sir G. Pomeroy Colley, conveying information by various channels as to the state of affairs and warnings as to the mode of warfare adopted by the rebels, but we have no knowledge as to whether any of them have reached.

"The last communication received from Sir George was dated the 19th December. It then appeared that he was sending up reinforcements of infantry with four guns and a small body of mounted men. This column will probably experience much difficulty in moving through the country, if met in anything like the spirit the rebels have exhibited elsewhere.

"Should your Excellency have an early opportunity, I should be glad if a copy of this letter could be forwarded to the Major-General Commanding."

accident occurring to a person having no home, he would be taken to the jail for treatment, as the only public building or institution available. The military hospital camp, which had occupied a central position on the camp ground, was withdrawn for greater protection within the interior lines. An iron store, used by the Ordnance Store Department, was given over as a medical store and dispensary, two of the stone huts as hospital wards, and several marquees and tents placed for the remainder of the patients in the provost prison-yard and the adjoining inclosure.

Civilians were classified, for hospital treatment, the same as soldiers and the members of their families. Medical men visited the camps, and medicines were dispensed at the hospital at stated hours every morning and afternoon. Medical comforts, extra articles of diet, were timely given to such as showed signs of requiring them, especially women and children —thus warding off the tendency to sickness. The general medical arrangements were entirely satisfactory, and deservedly appreciated by the civil population — all classes having confidence in the skill of the surgeons, and feeling that the best was being done for them. The unexpected additional duties and enlarged responsibilities suddenly imposed on Brigade-Surgeon Sheen were ably met, and difficulties in organisation thoughtfully foreseen or provided against.[1]

[1] Mr Charles Du-Val, in his camp paper of the 15th January 1881, thus pays a high tribute to the efficiency of the hospital arrangements made :—

"If war evokes the fiercer passions of man, it has the advantage of

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Civil surgeons.

Some trouble there was with the civil doctors, who, after performing certain medical duties assigned to them by district orders for about three weeks, combined in objecting to their services being thus compulsorily required, as was done with all civilians, and peremptorily demanded five guineas a-day remuneration, or that their resignation should be accepted. As some

also awakening the better side of his nature, and foremost may be ranked the efforts made the moment the strife of battle is over to alleviate the sufferings of those who have been its victims, and whose wounded frames testify to its destructive forces. We were particularly struck with this, not once, but over and over again, when visiting the military hospitals of the camp, and noting the great care and evident solicitude exhibited to both wounded friend and foe, and the unsparing endeavours made to render their convalescence speedy and painless. And another feature, and one of the brightest in this the sad side of warfare, is the evident cheerfulness with which these endeavours are carried out, awakening, as they evidently do, a response from the sufferers, who take their fate like men, and, accepting the hazard of war, bear their sufferings uncomplainingly. There is no lack of attention, either from the officials connected with the hospitals or the outside public, who desire to show their interest in the success of those whose immediate duty it is to administer to the wounded, and to heal the sick. Therefore it is that we desire to offer a meed of praise to the workers in the hospitals; and we feel certain that we are expressing the sentiments of its wounded occupants in saying that these workers, from the head of the medical staff to the meanest attendant, have secured, as they deserve, the warmest gratitude from those whom war's mischances have placed broken and wounded in their care."

And again, writing on the 2d March, on the "Health State of the Camp," he thus expresses himself:—

"Grumblers we have many amongst us, and deep and dire are the anathemas growled out by persons who generally have not much really to complain of. We ask those discontented ones to reflect upon the health state of the camp as it is, and as it has been from the beginning of the Pretorian exodus to the present time. We think there is scarcely any second opinion that 5000 people suddenly huddled together into spaces so small as those comprised in the Military Camp and Tronk Laager, and dwelling for the period of seventy days in such confined places, can point to a death-rate so small, and a general health report so free from serious disease."

of these gentlemen had accompanied the ambulance in the field, and so performed military duty, it was decided to give them the same rate of pay—one guinea a-day each—as granted to civil surgeons during the Zulu campaign. This amount being deemed insufficient and objected to, their further services—somewhat to their surprise—were dispensed with by the officer commanding. The "strike" would have been only an amusing incident, but that the example thus set was likely to have, and probably had, an evil influence on others, particularly as the leader in this case was seen to be a Government medical officer. The latter, however, seemed to consider that he had right on his side, and had been badly treated, for he continued afterwards to urge attention to the matter by printing a circular giving the correspondence to the public.[1]

[1] "The 'News of the Camp' of the 20th January 1881, contained the following remarks:—

"There is an old adage which says, 'When doctors differ, who is to decide?' and we presume it is owing to the tendency of medical gentlemen to hold opposite opinions when in consultation which suggested the old saying we have quoted. But here, at the present moment, we have the rule duly proved by the exception, and a beautiful evidence of unanimity of sentiment displayed by the civilian medical men at present in camp and laager. These gentlemen have thrown down the gage to the authorities, and refused to do further duty, upon the grounds of insufficient payment. And when we first heard of the disagreement we were under the impression that their services had been impressed, and as far as we could learn, the matter of payment had not been arranged, nor was it apparently contemplated. Further inquiries, however, have brought some facts to the surface which throw additional light, and by it we are enabled to perceive that the grounds of complaint are not of the serious character implied. The Government authorities, it appears from the notice which we have perused, offered all the civil medical gentlemen the allowance of a guinea a-day, free rations for themselves, families, and servants, and also granted permission for any private practice that could

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Wood-cutting.

The supply of fuel was a constant and severe labour, large quantities being necessary for the commissariat bakery and ordinary cooking purposes daily. The town, before hostilities, was dependent on the farmers and well-to-do natives coming to market with waggon-loads of wood from the distant bushveld, who

be undertaken compatibly with the performance of their allotted duties. This, apparently, was not deemed sufficient remuneration; and were we calculating the earnings of these gentlemen in the normal condition of Pretoria and its surroundings, we should have no hesitation in pronouncing it totally inadequate in amount. This, however, is not a time of an ordinary character, but one which demands, and which has already secured, sacrifices of a most unusual kind from men of all ranks, grades, professions, and business occupations; and taking these facts into consideration, we are bound to consider that it is but fair for the doctors—who must admit their being as one with us, as citizens of Pretoria, and supporters of the British interests there—to offer for the benefit of the defenders of the town the services of their skilled powers. The real *casus belli* is simply this, that when the news of the disaster to the 94th Regiment arrived, and it was necessary that medical aid should be at once forwarded and without delay, a local member of that profession was forwarded to the scene, and his services secured on special terms; but at this time martial law had not been declared—Pretoria was not considered in a state of siege—and the position of the surgeon sent to Bronkhorst Spruit is not an analogous one to that now held in camp by his professional brethren. Serious difficulty, unlimited work, and personal danger of no mean character, all may be said to surround this gentleman; and taking these facts into consideration, we fail to perceive that his payment is any precedent upon which claims can be founded. We have too much respect for the medical profession generally to say one word against its members, but we must be permitted to think that the action taken by the civil doctors is misguided, and feel sure that a short reflection on their part will convince them of the propriety of making a sacrifice of their skill for the benefit of those assembled beneath the protection of her Majesty's forces. They have seen, as well as we have, members of equally learned professions, both law and divinity, to say nothing of persons holding high civil appointments, working like slaves at duties fit only for a Kafir labourer, and receiving no remuneration whatever; and with these examples before their eyes, we have too great confidence in the heads as well as the hearts of these gentlemen to believe that we shall really be called to put upon the record of our beleaguerment such an unpleasant incident as A DOCTOR'S STRIKE!"

then returned to their farms with articles purchased at the stores by the proceeds of the sale. It being the warm season, there was probably less in hand than at other times, though but a hand-to-mouth sort of supply was generally kept.

In order to obtain fuel, and yet not interfere with or destroy the trees about the town, sad havoc had to be committed over a pretty bit of country in the neighbourhood, beyond Fort Tully, where the Fontein stream—the source of the town water-supply—wound its way between high hills, its banks clothed with underwood and small trees.

It was certainly a picturesque scene when the company of woodcutters were employed, scattered about, their rifles piled close at hand, the sound of their axes reverberating in the valley, and the ox-waggons moving to and fro, with much noise, carrying away the felled wood; or, later on, the quieter *tableau*, when the men would be collected into small groups, sheltering themselves under the trees from the fierce mid-day sun, sitting, eating their meal or enjoying their pipes, while the smoke from their cooking-fires would gently curl upwards, giving an air of a pleasant picnic to the whole scene. But only so in appearance; for, to the workers, the labour was hard, the axe an unaccustomed tool, the heat often intense, with thunderstorms drenching to the skin.

Biltong manufactured.

In anticipation of the period of the year when grazing would be getting more deficient, and difficulty be experienced in keeping cattle alive, it was con-

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sidered prudent to manufacture and lay in a stock of *biltong*,[1] to meet the requirements of a lengthened investment. Accordingly, a hut in the middle of the camp ground, which had formerly been part of the camp hospital, was devoted to the purpose, and some natives being placed under the superintendence of a gentleman "learned in the law," the manufacture progressed satisfactorily for a time; the roof of the hut, to which strips of the meat were hung, much as herrings in the curing process, being seen to be gradually caving in from the weight attached to its rafters. But soon the Commissariat officials discovered, to their dismay, that the quantity forthcoming could not be made to tally with the number of quarters of beef handed over, even though large deduction was made for loss by drying. A formal inquiry followed, but no other conclusion could be formed than that the wily native had somehow proved too much for the advocate's vigilance.

Manufacture of fuel.

The manufacture of cow-dung fuel, with the view of supplementing, or, should necessity arise, taking the place of wood, was another industry carried on in the vicinity of the camp, ably directed by Mr Mundt, a farmer who had resided about six miles out, but had come in for protection. The dung was collected from the cattle-kraals and transport-laagers, and with the aid of a wooden mould as used in brick-making, and water, was turned into fuel-bricks, or cakes, as they were usually called. These were

[1] Dried meat.

then placed to bake in the sun, care being taken to cover them in case of wet weather; and in a few days, when sufficiently hard, were stacked under shelter. The natives seemed to take great interest in, and to work *con amore* at, this employment.

Message from Sir George Colley.

A month had elapsed without any communication from Sir George Colley, when, on the 21st January, a civilian brought in a message for the Administrator, which gladdened the hearts of the troops and all loyal people. This message, already three weeks old,—the first and only one received from outside the Transvaal during the investment,—had been despatched from Natal to East London by sea—the telegraph line across country being broken—and thence by telegraph to Kimberley. There the services of Mr Dacomb being engaged, that gentleman set out on the 5th January, and after an adventurous ride of seventeen days, during which he successfully eluded the Boer patrols, reached the district north of Pretoria, and, with the aid of native guides, managed to pass unobserved through the enemy's line on the Magaliesberg range, and enter the town on foot.

Sir George Colley, after enumerating the reinforcements of different arms under orders from England and India, is said to have intimated that a separate column might perhaps be organised to proceed to the Transvaal by way of the Diamond Fields, but that he himself should lead a column from Natal, which would reach Standerton on the 21st January —the day the message arrived—Colonel Bellairs

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being requested to cause diversions to be made from Pretoria.

Advantage was taken of Mr Dacomb's welcome arrival to send him back with despatches a couple of days later by the same route. His return journey was successfully accomplished in the same daring manner, and by this means the imperial Government was fully informed of all that had taken place in the Transvaal up to the date of his leaving Pretoria—23d January. Mr Dacomb well earned the cheque for £350, which he was said to have received for his services. Some of the Pretoria merchants and inhabitants also arranged with him to carry messages for them. His anxiety to secure further commissions in this way may have induced him to attempt to delay his departure for another day, as it was rumoured that he received a hint from the officer commanding the troops that unless he cleared out of the place quickly, in accordance with his instructions and the arrangements made for him, he, Colonel Bellairs, might be under the disagreeable necessity of sending him before a drumhead court-martial, and despatching another man in his place, delay—as calculated to afford information to the enemy—being dangerous to the undertaking.

Mr Dacomb reached Kimberley again in about seventeen days; but it was only in the early part of March, by which time the peace negotiations were in progress, that the official despatches forwarded by him arrived in England.[1] The English public re-

[1] Published, with others connected with South Africa, in the Blue-book presented to Parliament April 1881.

mained without reliable intelligence from inside Pretoria. Some meagre accounts were certainly given in the English papers, purporting to emanate from that place; but, as given, the occurrences referred to were invariably incorrect, and more or less unrecognisable. The garrison was also greatly overestimated, as many as 2000 fighting men being spoken of, with 2000 horses available to mount them.[1]

Effectives in the garrison.

We have seen a return of the garrison, dated the last week of hostilities, showing the number of effectives at that period. This would differ but little from that at the commencement of the investment, as if, during the later time, there were more men in hospital there were fewer in prison, many sentences

[1] Even the author of 'A Narrative of the Boer War' appears to have been led astray, as he computes "the total number of effective fighting men" at "about 2000 in all"; and owing to this erroneous estimate, he is, perhaps naturally enough, disposed to give scant praise to the defenders. Mr Carter allows, though, that "in Pretoria there was a doubtful element, as I have already said, as dangerous to our arms—as much feared, at all events—as was the dynamite by the Boers. Many instances are on record of one brother carrying a rifle in this city whilst the other brother had to do his best to obtain its surrender. It was perhaps this danger in the midst of the defenders which, to a certain extent, is accountable for the manner in which the defence of the capital was conducted, and offensive movements with inoffensive results to the enemy carried out." Were it not that the latter conclusion was, no doubt, grounded on the supposition that the information he had received was correct, that the strength of the garrison was nearly double that which it actually was, one would feel tempted to inquire, what more could have been done in the defence of the place than was successfully undertaken, in the circumstances in which the defenders were placed, and with the means at their disposal. The town was certainly not left wholly defenceless, as implied elsewhere in Mr Carter's account.

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having been remitted in the interval. The only deductions from the total present are on account of men actually then in hospital or prison. All others are entered as effective duty men. The number of the latter category — horse and foot — is given as follows :—

Mounted—		
Infantry	82	
Pretoria Carbineers	84	
Nourse's Horse (Europeans) . .	48	
	—	214

For this mounted force there were, then, but 198 horses left; but, of course, action and disease had considerably reduced their number.

Then of infantry there were—

Foot Regulars—		
Royal Engineers	41	
R. S. Fusiliers	389	
94th Regiment	78	
	—	508
Volunteers, Pretoria Rifles . . .		366

There were also the division of two guns Royal Artillery.

The mounted volunteers were a thoroughly reliable body of men, superior for the kind of work required of them to the mounted infantry. The same dependence could not, as already hinted, be placed on the foot volunteers.

Communication with outside places.

During the investment communication was, with an occasional misadventure, successfully carried on

between headquarters at Pretoria and the forts at Rustenburg and Marabastadt, by means of natives. Despatches were also similarly sent to Natal and England by way of Zeerust and Kimberley, which town they reached in three or four weeks. Some messages were even sent *viâ* the Portuguese settlement at Delagoa Bay. A triplicate message sent to Potchefstroom, dated 22d December, only reached about four weeks later; after which, though repeated attempts were made, both by white and black men, no one was able to penetrate through the Boer lines there. All the forts were ordered to hold out to the last extremity.[1]

Immense difficulty was likewise experienced in getting through the enemy's network of patrols around Standerton and towards Natal. Owing to the Boer laagers being kept at great distances from

[1] "Officer Commanding, Potchefstroom.

"Your report of 17th received. 94th from Lydenburg have been cut off. Hold out, but do not take the field with so small a force. At last, should no assistance reach in time, render guns and arms useless.

"W. B.

"*December* 22, 1880, 6 P.M."

The above was again sent December 28, 1880, with the following addition: "Reinforcements are coming from Natal." Also copy of district order paragraph 3, December 28, 1880, about flags of truce.

The above, dated December, 22, 1880, was again sent with the same addition as was sent on December 28, 1880, on January 1, 1881.

"Officer Commanding, Potchefstroom.

"1st January.—Rebels have taken large quantities of clothing from 94th. This may be used for purposes of surprise. Exercise great caution in identifying armed bodies in our uniform before allowing approach. Reinforcements coming from Natal. Mrs Thornhill well. All inhabitants in Pretoria withdrawn into camp. W. B."

See also Blue-book (c.—2866), April 1881, pp. 158-160.

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Pretoria, it was comparatively easy for messengers thence to be passed through their extended lines in that quarter; and, when once in districts inhabited by natives more or less favourably inclined to the British, to obtain supplies of food and be passed on —with hints how best to avoid patrols—to their destination. Towards Standerton and Natal, however, the native kraals were very scarce, and their inhabitants being overawed or siding with the Boers, it became no easy matter to escape observation. The native messengers sent in that direction had to take with them as much *scoff*[1]—biscuit and biltong in this case—as they could conveniently carry, and avoid meeting any one on the road. For this purpose they might have to make great detours, and remain hidden for days, watching their opportunities to get through. In several instances the men returned, even after sighting Standerton, to give an account of their failure to pass in. Others were not again heard of; but one, a Zulu, at all events succeeded—as will be seen in the account given further on of the defence of Standerton—in getting in on the 29th January, and afterwards went on, through great risk and danger, to Natal, where he was able to hand over the papers he was charged with to Sir George Colley.

How messages were carried.

Various were the dodges resorted to for hiding the papers sent in this way, and lessening the chances of their discovery; but the most successful was that of the hollowed-out stick—detailed in another chapter —as, should the native be in danger of being made

[1] Food, generally mealies.

a prisoner, and afraid of becoming compromised, he could drop the stick in the grass, or other favourable spot, and trust to be able to recover it afterwards. Clothes were frequently burnt by the enemy, to prevent the possibility of concealed messages being carried further. Photography was brought into play, to make microscopic copies of despatches, orders, &c.; and Mr Gros, the excellent photographer of Pretoria, a Swiss, was requisitioned for the purpose in the intervals of his armed duties.

The situation on 29th January.

On the 29th January Colonel Bellairs thus summed up the situation in an order of the day :—

"Six weeks have elapsed since the commencement of hostilities, and during that period the various military posts occupied by her Majesty's forces in the Transvaal have been invested and communication cut off by the enemy.

"Yet, notwithstanding that their force largely preponderates over ours, and consists of well-mounted and armed Boers, having a perfect knowledge of the country, only once has any success been obtained by it, and that only from circumstances which have been before explained and remarked upon.

"All the forts hold out, and every attack has been beaten off—so successfully, indeed, that the enemy would now appear to shrink from any direct assault, and to have adopted the tactics of sitting down in the hope of starving the garrisons into surrendering.

"Accounts, direct and indirect, bear testimony to the foresight, caution, and ability exhibited by the commanders,—viz., Bt. Lt.-Colonel Winsloe, 2-21st Foot, and Major Thornhill, R.A., at Potchefstroom; Captain Auchinleck, 2-21st Foot, at Rustenburg, and Captain Brook and 2d Lt. Long, 94th Foot, at Marabastadt and Lydenburg—and the admirable defence made by all under their command.

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"Around Pretoria, the successful attacks on the enemy's positions have resulted in a probable rebel loss of 65 or more killed.

"At Potchefstroom there would appear to have been frequent and severe fighting, with uniform heavy loss to the rebels,—over 100 killed.

"The small garrisons of Rustenburg and Lydenburg have repelled the attacks of the rebels, with slight loss to themselves, and about 10 of the enemy killed.

"There has been no certain information regarding the forts at Wesselstroom [1] and Standerton, beyond that the rebels have been similarly driven off."

The estimate formed at this time of the enemy's losses around Pretoria was, no doubt, far too high; and, for the reason already given, it is probable that many Boers were erroneously reported as killed.[2]

Skirmish on 23d January.

During one of the reconnaissances and skirmishes with the enemy on the 23d January, under the command of Captain Sanctuary, in the direction of the Wonderboom Poort, Captain Anderson, of the Pretoria Carbineers, received a ball through one of his legs, which disabled him for some weeks.

Attack on Derde Poort.

On the 4th February, on the strength of native information, giving the position of a few waggons said to be laagered behind the hill at Derde Poort, about eight miles distant, Colonel Bellairs determined to endeavour to surprise the post and blow up the waggons. A mounted party with explosives was sent forward early in the dark, while Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, with a supporting body, rested on the parallel range

[1] Sometimes called Wakkerstroom. [2] See *ante*, p. 137.

of hill opposite. Colonel Bellairs and his aide-de-camp, with Mr Lagden, Private Secretary to the Administrator, went out later—at four o'clock—intending to join Lieut.-Colonel Gildea; but so dark was it, that though they were in the valley between the attacking and supporting parties, they failed to discover the latter until dawn came on. Beyond the surprise and rapid flight of a small Boer picket and interchange of some shots, the affair had no result. The laager had no existence. Either the intelligence given by the native who had come in was false, or the waggons had been moved elsewhere.

News of Sir George Colley's first reverse.

On the 7th February a messenger arrived from Heidelberg, under a flag of truce, bearing a letter from Vice-President Kruger to the Administrator, requesting an exchange of prisoners. This referred to Major Clarke, Captain Raaf, &c., captured at Potchefstroom, on the one side, and the Boers taken at Zwart Kopje on the other. An answer was returned to the effect that the proposal could not be entertained.[1] The messenger also brought with him copies of the latest Boer Government 'Gazette,' which was found to contain two short despatches, written in a plain diffident style, from Commandant-General Joubert to Vice-President Kruger and Assistant Commandant-General P. A. Cronjé, announcing his victory of the 28th January. The excitement was great until the 'Gazette' had been fully translated; succeeded, as was natural, by some depression, as the truth of the story

[1] See Appendix N*.

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became painfully impressed upon those most capable of judging of its credibility.

Thus the hopes of speedy relief which, entertained by many, had been strengthened by the receipt on the 21st January of Sir George Colley's message, sent three weeks before, that reinforcements were on their way, were in great measure dispelled. It became more evident that, as had been early surmised by Colonel Bellairs, the advance of Sir George Colley would have to be made under great difficulties—every step forward being opposed, and delay ensuing through the necessity for waiting for cavalry reinforcements to come up.[1]

The "Sister Annes."

There were, though, still some—of the class whom no experience gained will teach to forecaste the future—who continued anxiously to expect Sir George Colley to make his appearance soon; who, listening to wild reports brought in by natives, really believed that his advance-guard must be close at hand. These were the "Sister Annes," who would perch themselves on the hill-tops overlooking the road from Heidelberg, and would search long and wistfully through their glasses in the vain endeavour to discover the waggons or tents of the advancing relieving army.

Delusive reports from the signal-stations.

Sometimes it would happen that even the look-out men at the hill-forts would become infected with this delusive impression, and believing they actually saw what some wished they should discover, they would, at one time, send down a report of a large encampment observed in the distance; and at another, of hundreds

[1] See *ante*, note, p. 158.

of waggons outspanned by the roadside miles away —all illusions, and perhaps turning out to have arisen from the sun shining on, and bringing more prominently into view, numerous white stones or rocks cropping out of the ground.

Native reports.

Similarly, through failure to estimate accurately the impediments in the way, and over-anxiety for long-expected relief, many caused mischief by giving too ready credence to the numerous reports, generally of a nature to please us, brought in by the natives. The tales these men told were duly translated and entered in, what came to be laughingly designated by unbelievers as, the "Book of Lies."

Some of the natives would give circumstantial descriptions of actions fought at Potchefstroom, Standerton, and elsewhere, in which the Boers were always worsted. Others had met with natives returning from the Diamond Fields, who had seen troops, and even marched alongside them, on the road between Kimberley and Potchefstroom. We heard of cavalry coming from the same direction—horsemen with swarthy faces and long black hair. Surely, it was said, this must be an Indian regiment of native cavalry? Sir George Colley had intimated that some of the reinforcements might be sent by way of Kimberley; and here was the advance-guard! Then came a report of the relief of Potchefstroom, and the departure of the *rooi baatjes*[1] from the town, with band playing at their head.

[1] Redcoats.

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The Civil Intelligence Branch certainly was not very successful in obtaining reliable information; and the military officers soon perceived that the reports derived from this source—the natives—could not be depended upon. Sometimes these men would be purposely sent in to mislead us; sometimes they would suit their communications to what they conjectured would please us, often waiting for some leading question to be put to them, to reply accordingly; and at other times they would relate, with an air of fact, what amounted to little more than the gossip, or "travellers' tales," they had heard over their camp-fires. When sent in, two or three together, by a chief, they were found to be trustworthy; but the chiefs and their tribes were, with the exception of those in the neighbourhood of Rustenburg, located in distant parts, away from where hostilities were being carried on.

Several of the natives, however, who thus came in to volunteer information, performed their part badly, and being suspected, were promptly lodged in the jail, where their services were utilised as scavengers.

The Schoeman family.

Midway between the Daas Poort and Wonderboom Poort was a farmhouse, in which Mr Schoeman, a Commandant-General of the former Republic, resided, with his daughter. He was an old man, crippled with rheumatism; but as his house was occasionally visited by patrols from both sides, and one of his sons—Hendrick Schoeman—was commanding the Boer troops round Pretoria, it was considered unde-

sirable that he should remain there, and he was accordingly given the option of coming into Pretoria or going out to a Boer laager. He chose the former course, and was brought in.

On the 8th February, the Boer General, Mr Hendrick Schoeman, sent in a messenger, from the Wonderboom Poort, with a letter for the Hon. P. Marais, member of the Executive Council, asking to be allowed to meet that gentleman, with a view to devising means for preventing further bloodshed. Sanction being given, and for him to see his brother and sister, he was, the following morning, brought into camp blindfolded, and taken inside a small hut. The conversation which ensued between him and Mr Marais only led to a suggestion on his part, that a republic, under the protectorate of England, should form the basis of a treaty. There being no authority to entertain any such proposal, the matter dropped. Mr Schoeman spoke very confidently of the Boer prospects, and the successes they had met with; said that it was expected the Orange Free State, and the Dutch party in the Cape Colony, would soon join them; and, finally, declared that two cannon were close at hand. He expressed a wish to see Colonel Bellairs; but that officer declined, unless Mr Schoeman would undertake, on leaving, to bring about an unconditional surrender of those in arms.

Amusements provided.

Great success attended the efforts made—both in the Headquarter Camp and the Convent Redoubt—

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to provide different kinds of amusements to suit all classes, and so drive away any tendency to gloom which, under such strange and novel circumstances, might be felt by many. As soon as everything became more settled, and the routine of daily duty better understood or found less irksome, various recreations began to be practised: athletic sports, cricket and polo matches were arranged; the band and pipers of the Royal Scots Fusiliers frequently enlivened the evening promenade, and now and then open-air concerts or theatrical performances were given; the Worshipful Master assembled his brother Masons at their hall in the town, and the Good Templars followed suit with a meeting in theirs; St Patrick's Day was kept, the festival being duly celebrated by a convivial meeting of Irishmen; the Germans had a "banquet" in honour of their Emperor's birthday.

Concerts.

Wooden stages were erected for concerts and performances on the Convent and Garrison Squares. The Convent Redoubt was the first to give an entertainment, on the eve of the new year. A piano was borrowed, and the Orpheus Glee Society of Pretoria gave their services. After glees, solos, and instrumental music, Major Le Mesurier introduced the National Anthem, with a stirring appeal to the audience that the time having arrived for all loyal people to rally round the throne, they should now prove the love and admiration they felt for their Queen by joining, heart and soul, in singing the anthem. At the conclusion three hearty cheers were given for her Majesty.

The Headquarter Camp was not to be outdone by the Convent Redoubt; so several energetic caterers for the diversion of the public—Lieutenant Hon. A. Hardinge, Captain Churchhill, and others, who earned the hearty thanks of the whole community—set to work to engage all the musical and histrionic talent available, and, after a rehearsal, gave a first performance on the 1st February, followed, at intervals, by three or four more of varied entertainment. Besides the Orpheus Glee Society, who sang most harmoniously on one night, several amateur ladies and gentlemen gave their services as vocalists or instrumentalists; the charming songs and music so pleasingly rendered by them adding greatly to the general enjoyment. Agreeable recollections of both songs and singers even now haunt us. We call to mind "The Midshipmite," sung with much pathos by D. A. Com.-General Wyon; "The Gallants of England," *con spirituoso* by Mr Du-Val; the melodious duet, "The moon has raised her lamp above," by Captain Tew and Mr Wyon; Captain Churchhill in his humorous version of the "topical" song, "A quiet sort of way"; the Misses Van Leenhof in their pretty duets; Corporal and Miss Slavin in a Scotch duet; and Sergeant Byrne and Corporal Barnett in comic singing, as good as most professionals.

Theatricals.

The amateur acting was such as fully justified the favourable reception it met with. "The Area Belle" was capitally given. It may be pleasing to some, who have reminiscences of this period in Pretoria, to have their memories refreshed as to the cast on these

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occasions: Sergeant Byrne as Pitcher; Corporal Hill as Tosser; Private Slavin as Walker Chalks; Private West as Mrs Croker; and Corporal Barnett as Penelope. The get-up of Private West was so good as to deceive most people, until accident somewhat disarranged *her* wig. "Box and Cox," on another evening, created roars of laughter—Mr Danford, Lieut. Hon. A. Hardinge, and Corporal Barnett (Mrs Bouncer) taking the parts. The comic piece, "Turn him out," was likewise loudly applauded: Sergeant Byrne as Nicodemus Nobbs; Mr Danford as Moke; Corporal Hill as Roseleaf; Corporal Barnett as Mrs Moke; and Private West as Susan,—all the characters excellently personated.

Christy Minstrels.

But the final performance, on the 21st March, given by the Christy Minstrels—Captains C—— and T——, Messrs T——, D——, Fry, D——, and others—was probably the most appreciated of all. The get-up of the dark gentlemen was admirable, and the way in which they went through their parts and sang their solos and choruses would have filled "a house" anywhere. Messrs Fry and T—— were the "leading" men. The former had had long experience, and been recently associated with Mr Du-Val in his "varieties" entertainments given in the different towns of South Africa: but the latter, though only an amateur, proved himself equally gifted in the droll-farcical "business," and, in despite of several inches over six feet in height, to excel "on the light fantastic toe." The marvellous rapid utterance in his choruses, displaying great power of memory, was a feature not often met with.

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Loretto Convent concert.

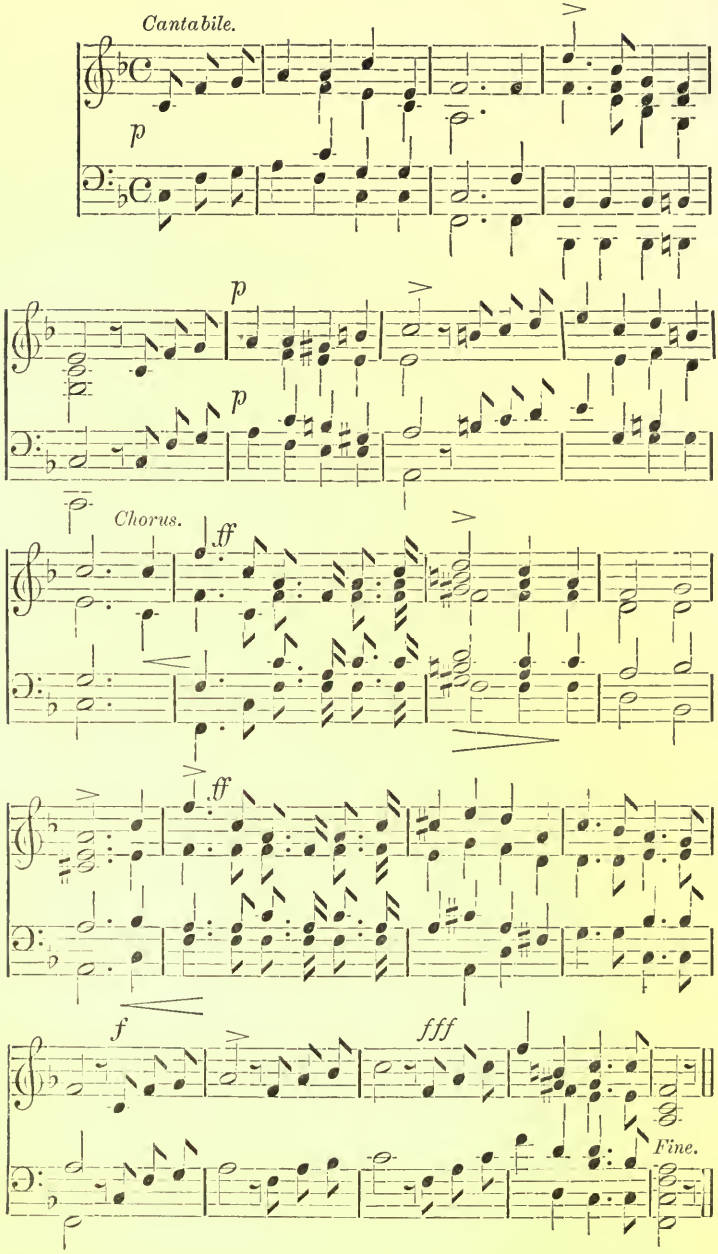
A very pretty musical and slightly dramatic performance was given, towards the close of the investment, by the Loretto Convent schoolgirls, with the object of raising a fund for improving the cemetery. No charge was made, but a collection at the end was liberally responded to by a large audience. The opening scene displayed little dots of only three years, singing merrily at "Pussy-cat's tea-party," all looking rosy and hearty, and showing that the state of siege had hitherto had only a beneficial influence with them. Then followed numerous quartet, duet, and solo performances on the piano, with pupils up to eighteen; and afterwards a short operetta. The songs, "From fair Savoy I come," and "Buy a broom," still linger in our ears; and we seem to see again the little Prosch, with bewitching charm of eye and manner, beseeching the audience to purchase her stock-in-hand.

Fusilier band.

In all these performances the band of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, as the orchestra, took a prominent part, under the direction of their accomplished bandmaster, Mr Daniels. A favourite, sweetly plaintive air, reported to have been sung as a lullaby by the Boer women when trekking in former troublous times, and since to have been suggested as the National Anthem of the South African Republic, was often played with great effect. A kind and talented musical friend has from memory furnished us with the following setting:—

National Hymn of the South African Republic.

TRANSVAAL REPUBLICAN ANTHEM.



A certain proportion of the volunteers from the Convent and Jail Laagers were allowed to attend the Headquarter Camp entertainments, but always equipped with their arms, ready for action. It formed a curious, weird sort of picture, looking from the stage on the mass of men, women, and children, sitting on benches, surrounded at the back and sides by a deep body of standing figures, conspicuous with rifles and bandoliers, and a background of tents and other martial appearances, with the sentinels' challenges heard every now and then, distant and near, the upturned faces at one moment dark from passing cloud, and the next whitened by the flood of soft light poured down by a South African moon.

Losses in attacks on the enemy's positions.

Some casualties happened, now and again, with the patrols and reconnoitring parties; but it was in the attacks—of which there were three, 6th and 16th January, and 12th February—on the Boer positions, that the greatest loss was experienced. This, of course, was only what might be expected, since the defenders of rugged and naturally strong positions have an enormous advantage over the assailants, who, besides, in this case, were subjected to flank attack, from the reinforcements coming up from the adjoining laagers on either side.

The value of such attacks on distant strongholds, with the certainty, even though successful in temporarily wresting them from the enemy, of losing many men—and those of the most reliable sort, who might be wanted later on—was always questionable;

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but the purposelessness and inutility of these encounters became more apparent, when it was recognised—by all but a hot-headed few, incapable of correctly forecasting the military situation, or else willing to risk reverse in an anxiety to force events—that the resistance the Boers were capable of offering would be such as to stop Sir George Colley's advance, until reinforcements could reach him from England; and that the General had been over-sanguine in notifying that he would reach Standerton by the 21st January.[1]

Diversions of such a nature on the approach of a relieving force—in accordance with a desire understood to have been expressed by Sir George Colley, when leaving Pietermaritzburg for the frontier—would have served an intelligible object; but when it became plain after the 7th February, on receipt of the news of Sir George Colley's check on the 28th January, that no relief force could be near, it would have been prudent to have refrained from uselessly engaging the garrison in more resultless actions, causing additional losses to the already, in truth, small enough reliable body of men left to cope with future possible emergencies, and thus avoid the chance of adding another to the frequent disasters—referred

[1] See *ante*, Colonel Bellairs's remarks of Jan. 17, pp. 157, 158. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea also, in his report on the Elandsfontein fight, showed how greatly he was impressed with the impracticability of achieving any decided success against the Boers without a sufficient force of cavalry. He said: "The Boers in this instance did not keep up their character for being good shots, though they excelled any previous performance of theirs I have seen in their rapidity of movement and their wonderful power of taking cover; and I am more convinced than ever that no real victory will ever be gained over them without a strong force of cavalry."

to in a previous note[1]—recently incurred, or even then taking place, to British arms in South Africa.

The foregoing reflections are partially illustrated in the failure of an attack on the Red House Laager, on the 12th February—undertaken, it was afterwards whispered, in deference to the expressed opinion of the Administrator, the officer commanding the troops considering that the time for making such an attack or diversion, in the absence of the approach of a relief column, had not arrived, and would serve no purpose.

Attack of the 12th February.

The enemy's positions had been already attacked to the east and to the west, columns having marched ten or eleven miles out for the purpose, with no inconsiderable risk attaching to their return journey—by which time the enemy had concentrated their forces. As an attack was to be adventured, the question arose, in what quarter? Colonel Bellairs was of opinion that a front attack of the Wonderboom position, to the north, would probably entail the loss of a hundred or more men; and even if taken, it would at the end of the day have to be evacuated, when it could again be occupied by the enemy. If that position was to be attacked, he was in favour of a force being sent round by the Derde Poort, to operate to the rear, while an attack in front was threatened or progressing. Officers commanding mounted corps considered—and were no doubt right—that their horses were not in a condition to perform the work which an

[1] See *ante*, p. 3.

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expedition in that direction would necessitate, it being calculated that, with the scouting required, fifty to sixty miles would have to be travelled over. The experiences gained, about this same period, on the Natal border, in the attempts made by Sir George Colley to thrust back the Boer invasion of the colony, would seem to show that, had a front attack been made on the Wonderboom, it would not unlikely have resulted in a similar reverse to that encountered at Laing's Nek on the 28th January, the former position being even stronger than the latter; and had a force been sent round to operate to the rear, another unfortunate action might possibly have had to be fought, like that of Ingogo on the 8th February.

Attention was then turned to the Red House Laager, about nine miles to the south, off the Heidelberg road, as offering the fewest obstacles to success. The ground being known to Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, from his previous skirmish there on the 29th December,[1] that officer was intrusted with the arrangements for the projected attack.

Strength of column.

The column sent out on this occasion consisted of the two field-guns, R.A., a small detachment of the Royal Engineers for explosive purposes, two companies of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and two troops of the Pretoria Carbineers and Nourse's Horse; with a Krupp 4-pounder gun, two companies of the Pretoria Rifles, and a few mounted infantry, to occupy reserve positions on the road. They moved off soon after 2 A.M., advancing under cover of night. The

[1] See *ante*, p. 120.

direction in which the column was to act was kept secret until the last, and the impression given that another would be taken. There can be little doubt, though—as the result showed—the enemy had early notice of its approach. But, let alone the possibility that information might have been conveyed by native agency, the noise unavoidably made by the guns and mule-waggons rolling along the road would sufficiently account for the enemy having had timely warning, and being prepared accordingly.

Disposition for attack.

The Carbineers, under Captain Sanctuary, acting as an advance-guard, pushed forward to the hill beyond the Six Mile Spruit. The Pretoria Rifles, under Major Le Mesurier, R.E., with the Krupp gun, were left on a hill to the left of the road overlooking the spruit, with an advanced party, to hold the houses at the drift; while Lieutenant Collings, with a detachment of mounted Fusiliers, occupied a hill on the right of the road, commanding the spruit and some dense bush on the opposite bank.

All being reported well from the front, the main body,—Nourse's Horse, under Captain Sampson; the two 9-pounder guns, under Lieutenant Hare; the detachment Royal Engineers, under Lieutenant Commeline; and the Fusiliers, under Captain Dunn,—then went over the stream and across country, until they had ascended the position held by the Carbineers. Here Lieutenant Stanuell was detached, to remain with 50 of the Fusiliers, and 25 of Nourse's Horse sent to seize some thick bush to the right, facing the Red House. Then Captain Sanctuary was instructed

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to endeavour to "rush" a large stone cattle-kraal, south of, and about a thousand yards from the Red House, which it commanded. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea followed, in support of this movement, with the main column, now reduced to the two field-guns, 20 of the Royal Engineers, 125 of the Fusiliers, and 25 of Nourse's Horse, until, reaching a good position on a hill with a few thorn-trees about it, 1500 yards from the kraal, and about the same distance from the Red House, now lying to the right, he halted, and the infantry formed up on two faces, towards the Red House and kraal.

The attack commenced.

It was now light. The enemy, moreover, were already in occupation of the kraal, and fully prepared to meet the impending attack. The Carbineers, on coming within short range, were received with volleys, and beaten back, Captain Sanctuary and several others falling. Retiring, and forming a concave line behind some sheltered rises of ground, their right resting on the main body and their left nearer to the kraal, the Carbineers continued to return the enemy's fire. The guns were brought into action, and some shells pitching with good effect, caused the Boers to evacuate the kraal by its rear. Their further movements becoming for a time hidden by intervening ground, they were at length discovered working round the left flank of the Carbineers.

Captain Sanctuary and some wounded men still lay in front, when, instead of attempting their removal by means of bearers, the medical officer in charge, no doubt through excess of zeal, notwith-

standing the remonstrances raised by Assistant Commissary-General Walton against the folly of taking the mules into the thick of the fire, removed the ambulance-waggon to the spot, several hundred yards beyond the front line.

The Carbineers driven in.

The Boers from the cattle-kraal having meanwhile galloped round the ridge and outflanked the left rear of the Carbineers' line, opened thence, under cover of some thorn-trees, a sharp fire in reverse. This movement took the Carbineers wholly by surprise; and although those on the left, under Lieutenant Walker, made a firm stand, the centre of their line gave way, and galloped in, in disorder, on the guns and infantry, causing temporary dismay and confusion. A few of Nourse's Horse had been sent to support the left of the Carbineers; but when the centre of the latter was broken and driven in, the Boers, by this time largely reinforced by others, coming up from the adjacent laager lying to the east, were enabled to take up fresh positions nearer, and then, from behind clumps of trees, at a distance of from 400 to 500 yards, pour in a flanking fire on the guns and infantry and the waggons below. The ambulance-waggon likewise became endangered and was fired upon. The Fusilier company was, through the disorderly retreat of the Carbineers, for the moment "out of hand," and officers engaged in rallying the men and restoring order. Lieut.-Colonel Gildea thereupon directed that the detachment of the Royal Engineers should occupy some bush to the left, and thence endeavour to keep the enemy in check—an order already anticipated and

Confusion resulting.

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in process of being carried out by Lieutenant Commeline before it reached him. These older soldiers, under their young intrepid officer, behaved with great coolness and resolution, and their action and fire at this critical moment had good effect in retarding the advance of the enemy.[1]

Lieut.-Colonel Gildea wounded.

Immediately after, becoming disabled by a ball through his thigh, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea directed Captain Dunn, the next senior officer, to effect a

[1] Bearing on the unsteadiness shown by some of our troops on occasions in recent wars, one who has noted instances of this evil in action remarks: "I attribute it wholly to the absence of a due admixture of old soldiers, and especially to the youth of the non-commissioned officers. Boys—and soldiers of eighteen or twenty, or even twenty-two, are but boys—are impressionable, and act upon impulse and not on principle. They are consequently ready to follow a majority, or an influential minority, into great danger with the utmost bravery, so long as the excitement of advance can be maintained; but they are easily depressed by a check, and are proportionably liable to panics. They act on impulse, and are therefore the best of soldiers so long as the impulse leads them in the right direction; but unfortunately the impulse is quite as likely to lead them backwards as forwards; and the non-commissioned officers being as much boys as the men under them, there is no ballast to 'steady the ship,' no drag to put on when impulse is playing the mischief. On a weary march, in a wet dismal camp, when food and shelter are scarce, when bullets are flying, then it is that the old soldier proves valuable. It is then that the inveterate grumbler ceases grumbling, and shows himself a veritable Mark Tapley; while the young soldier is too apt to cave in, to exhibit despair, to lose all heart, and to set his mind upon one thing alone—getting safely back again. That is my experience of two wars of quite different kinds."

Reliable as our officers have proved themselves on occasions such as alluded to by the above writer, they are not, and cannot be, in themselves alone, sufficient, on emergency, to furnish the required "ballast" or "drag" to prevent sudden panic or collapse. The fault does not indeed rest with them, but arises wholly from the causes explained above. What the result may be in India, in the event of another mutiny, it is not difficult to foresee, unless the tendency, now observable, to keep the older soldier as a leaven in the ranks, and to retain non-commissioned officers to pension, is adhered to.

withdrawal of the column, though, lying on a mule-waggon, he still continued to receive reports, and give such instructions as he considered were desirable from time to time.

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Retreat ordered.

The mule-drivers, hearing the balls whistling past them, and seeing many of the mules being struck, had already commenced an independent rush homewards, when, fortunately, Assistant Commissary-General Walton—who had been on the hill above with Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, usefully rendering assistance in restoring order—was able to get in front of the leading waggon, and by threatening the driver with a revolver, stopped his headlong course. Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Heygate and Conductor Feldshaw also rendered opportune energetic assistance with the rear and centre of the waggon line, which was thus brought to proceed at a walk in single file to a less exposed place.

Panic with the mule-waggon drivers.

Fifty of the Fusiliers were then despatched to strengthen the party of volunteers at the drift, and secure the passage of the stream. The main column afterwards retired, the Carbineers falling back and covering its flanks, and Nourse's Horse its rear. It was now seen that the ambulance-waggon had not joined. A halt ensued, until it being ascertained that the enemy were in possession of the waggon, and moving it towards the Red House, the retreat was continued.

The column was met at the Six Mile Spruit by Colonel Bellairs, he having been informed that Lieut.-Colonel Gildea had been disabled. The Boers en-

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deavoured to gain the bush on their side of the stream, to our right of the drift; but were prevented by the party, under Lieutenant Collings, previously posted on the hill with that object, together with some mounted infantrymen, brought up by Colonel Bellairs, who were ordered by him to occupy the near bank. A few shells being also fired from Major Le Mesurier's position, checked any intention of the enemy to advance further. The skirmish ceased between seven and eight o'clock, having lasted about two hours and a half.

Lieutenant Commeline, on the order to retire, endeavoured to lay mines on the positions vacated, with a view to arresting the enemy's advance; but, owing to insufficient time, was unable to effect his purpose successfully. His name, as also those of Corporal Ferguson, R.E., and Private Kitto—a civil engineer—of the Pretoria Carbineers, were specially mentioned for great coolness under fire when making this attempt. Among others who elicited praise were Trooper C. F. Palmer—a clerk in the Surveyor-General's office—of the Pretoria Carbineers, for his gallant conduct in carrying a wounded man out of action for a considerable distance under a hot fire; and Lieutenant Walker, for the firm stand he made with his portion of the Carbineers on the left, thus materially assisting in covering the guns.

Losses.

Although only one man was killed in action, fifteen non-commissioned officers and men, besides Lieut.-Colonel Gildea and Captain Sanctuary, were wounded, nearly all dangerously, in the lower extremities.

Captain Sanctuary and about half the other cases succumbed.

Mrs Erasmus, the mother of one of the wounded men captured with the ambulance-waggon, being desirous of going to the Red House to nurse her son, she was allowed to drive out in the evening with two other ladies—Mrs Ferriera and Mrs Clarke. They were well treated; and on the return of the latter, it being understood that the Boer Commandant was willing to allow the wounded men and the surgeon to be given up, if the Boer prisoners we held were released, these men were sent out unconditionally—as the local Government did not wish to compromise itself by granting an exchange of prisoners — with an ambulance-waggon for the wounded, who were then returned, accompanied by the surgeon. The captured ambulance was also employed in bringing in the wounded, but conditionally on its being sent back, which was accordingly done. Young Erasmus only lived a day or two after being brought in.

Exchange of prisoners.

Nowhere but in the Transvaal are the horses so well trained to suit the hunting requirements of the people, or so well adapted for this kind of warfare. A tap on the shoulder when at full gallop suffices to bring the animal to a dead halt, enabling the Boer to dismount at the same moment, throw down his bridle-rein, and at once take deliberate aim with his rifle, or, if desired, leave his horse under cover, and run forward to deliver his fire from the crest of

Boer mode of fighting.

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a hill, knowing that on his return he will find his horse quietly grazing at the same spot.

We have never had any mounted body in the field to approach the Boers—men and horses—in general aptitude for scouting work. Our cavalry regiments may be all that is fitting for acting together and executing a charge, but scarcely for shooting or scouting. Nor have either men or horses, of any mounted infantry we have formed, ever been trained intelligently for the proper duties likely to be required of them. What kind of figure would a troop of cavalry or mounted infantry—according to our recent standard—offer, if the men were sent singly at a gallop, to dismount at a certain point, and fire at a mark? How long, in comparison with the Boer, would each man take in dismounting, delivering his fire, and clearing off again, himself all the time, say, a mark for an enemy? And how often in comparison would he hit the mark?

Mounted infantry.

Mounted infantry with us hitherto have been a mere makeshift for the absence of cavalry. The fair riders of an infantry regiment, being few in number, have necessarily had to be chosen, without much reference to their shooting qualifications, and an inferior weapon placed in their hands, instead of the long rifle to which they had become accustomed. The colonel, liking to see his mounted troop do credit to his regiment in appearance, selects a smart officer for the command, and gradually the troop is assimilated to that of a cavalry corps, and endeavours to work with the same precision of movement. The

infantry soldier, who has been habituated day by day, for long periods, to march "in touch" with his comrades, is, as a rule, little likely to develop that independence, or follow that scattered rapidity of movement observable with the Boers, which has, in the late war, so often saved them from becoming a mark for artillery or even rifles. Some of the few mounted infantry in the Transvaal had had, however, a better training in this respect than usual, through having acted, under energetic officers, in an independent form, with small look-out parties searching for or in pursuit of deserters.

Mounted infantry, as first employed in the American Civil War, was an intelligible idea enough—the horses being used merely as a means of locomotion, to transfer an infantry force from one spot to another, and enable it to frustrate, or else make, a flank attack.

How mounted infantry should be organised.

But if a corps is wanted,—and there can be no doubt it would prove most valuable for scouting purposes—to seize and temporarily hold advanced positions—to harass infantry and artillery—to attack or make a feint on a flank,—that is, a corps after the Boer model—the men should be recruited as, or made thoroughly good independent sharpshooters, and practised horsemen, and the horses should be trained to meet their special requirements. The Boer war should at least have taught us this much.

If we ever raise such a body of men, it would be well to take precautions that they are not suffered to deteriorate through any well-meant but mistaken efforts—as over-drill and over-dress—to make them

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present a more martial and showy appearance at a review, and win transient approbation from spectators at a "march past." They should not furnish generals and others with smart orderlies and escorts; but give their whole time and attention to horsemanship and shooting.

Conveyance of infantry in mule-waggons.

The defence of Pretoria is probably the only occasion upon which mule-waggons have been systematically utilised for the conveyance of infantry into and out of action. At Zwart Kopje, Elandsfontein, and Red House, as also in making distant reconnaissances and forays, they were so employed. The advantages were great. The enemy was reached at a much greater distance than was otherwise possible, and could be surprised sometimes at daybreak before his reinforcements could come up. The troops went into action comparatively fresh, and could be kept in action a longer time. The retirement after the conclusion of the operations could be effected more rapidly, and the mounted troops were less distressed through not having to regulate their movements by those of infantry on foot. Without such help, the infantry, in this case, could not, at such a hot season, have traversed the distances they sometimes were required to cover, so as to have given the necessary time for operations and afterwards regaining the camp the same day. From eighteen to twenty-five men used to be carried in each waggon, drawn by eight or ten mules.

The clergy of the different persuasions were most

zealous in their duties,—holding numerous services, visiting the hospitals and sick people in the camps, and superintending their schools.

Clerical services.

The Dutch minister, the Rev. Mr Bosman, was absent; though he was allowed to come into the lines for a short time in February, and then return to look after his outside flock at the several Boer laagers. The Rev. G. Weavind, Wesleyan minister, took over Mr Bosman's interior charge in addition to his own. This gentleman will be long pleasantly remembered, for the energetic but kindly way in which he performed camp duties as sanitary officer, in addition to his onerous clerical work; assisting the Camp Quartermaster in arranging troublesome matters, smoothing over difficulties, and removing obstacles to order; going his evening rounds among civilian huts and tents, and cheerily ordering "lights out."

Dutch.

Wesleyan.

If a skirmish was known to be going on, the Roman Catholic Fathers would be seen endeavouring to reach the scene of action, and to be in time to administer the last rite of consolation to any requiring it on the ground. Bishop Jolivet was absent visiting Potchefstroom; but the Rev. Fathers de Lacy, Meyer, and Kenna officiated in his absence. One of the saddest events during the investment was the death of the Bishop's sister, aged only thirty-five, after a short illness, on the 15th January. She was the Lady Superior and Foundress of the Loretto Convent—an educational establishment only started since the annexation, but which had already, under her wise and devoted supervision, acquired a high status for culture

Roman Catholic.

Loretto Convent.

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and accomplishments. No one seeing the pupils occasionally could fail to notice the gradual improvement effected in their appearance and demeanour under the softening influences brought to bear by this kind lady and her Sisters. The Bishop and his sister came originally from Brittany. Having obtained a site outside the town, the church and convent were built, and the grounds laid out and planted. Often they might be seen engaged with their Breton gardener in giving directions for the further improvement of the property. Then suddenly the war breaks out, and all is changed. The military include the site in their plans for defence; trees are cut down; fences levelled; and the buildings loopholed, and occupied with armed men; only a small part remains as a refuge for the nuns. Although every possible consideration was shown in the circumstances, yet, no doubt, the constant anxiety and alarm these ladies were unavoidably kept in, must have told upon their health. This, together with increased responsibility, in the care of her Sisters, probably caused the Lady Superior to succumb to an illness which might otherwise not have been serious. Her funeral was conducted with much ceremony, in the presence of a large concourse of mourners, on the 17th January — it having been postponed by the Fathers from the previous day, in consequence of the state of excitement into which the camps had been thrown, through the town being threatened by a party of Boers in the absence of the main portion of the troops, engaged, ten miles away, in an attack on the Elandsfontein position; and the body was deposited

Death of Lady Superior.

in a vault constructed in the Convent ground, wreaths and flowers dropped by the loving hands of former pupils covering the coffin.

Bishop of Pretoria.

The Bishop of Pretoria was on his return journey from a meeting of the Diocesan Synod in the Cape Colony, and had reached Standerton when the war broke out. Nothing daunted, he pushed on, leaving by the last post-cart on the 23d December. At Heidelberg he was stopped, but eventually allowed by the triumvirate to go on, and he soon after joined his family, who had already removed to the camp. His lordship's physical powers must have been good, for every Sunday he generally managed to get through five services, held in the different camps or the cathedral, and "matins" and "evensong" each week-day in the open air. We fear that his efforts met with but a poor response at the daily services, and that then but "two or three" would "be gathered together."

The position in which Dr Bousfield has been now left, through the retrocession of the province, is one very different from that which existed before, though even that turned out by no means equal to what he had been led to expect before he left England in 1878. Giving up a good living, with a comfortable rectory, in one of the pleasantest counties, and migrating at middle age with a wife, an accomplished lady, and large family, accustomed to English society and style of living, was no ordinary sacrifice. To any but those who grew their own produce and led the life of Boers, living in the Transvaal cost double that

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in England. The withdrawal of the British Government, garrison, and most of the English population, while most materially darkening his own and his family's prospects, has largely crippled his means and power for good in the interests of his Church. Dr Bousfield being a man of powerful frame and naturally energetic character, he has hitherto been able to move about his extensive diocese, and encounter fatigue in a way which he cannot expect to be able to accomplish satisfactorily a few years hence. The anticipation of this period—which cannot be long deferred and may be close at hand—cannot but be a cause of serious anxiety to him and his.

People suspected of holding communication with the enemy.

Feeling occasionally ran very high against persons suspected of holding communication with the enemy, by means of natives, signal-lights, &c., or of spreading false or injurious reports. To have a Dutch name was to some people like a red rag to a bull. Even trusted officers of volunteers had reports lodged against them, and their loyalty suspected. Many people lost their heads in such matters, and gave credence to any absurd story which responded to their prejudices. They would go to the deputy provost-marshal, the garrison commandant, or even the colonel commanding, and seek to influence them to take summary action against suspected individuals. Fortunately these officers had cooler judgments, and required direct evidence, which never seemed forthcoming, of the acts related. Had they given way to the evident desire of some, that they should exercise

their summary powers and make examples, very ugly results might have followed. A careful watch was, however, kept, parties sometimes lying out at night, surrounding certain houses and places; but though a latent suspicion was still occasionally entertained, no sufficient proof of guilt could in any case be obtained. Ladies were by no means exempted from suspicion. One, who was said to be engaged to be married to a known Boer sympathiser, was an especial object of distrust, it having been repeatedly averred that she used signalling-lights at nights. Another woman, who might in former days have fared badly as a witch for her predictions—and for that matter would, at this time, if those who had the wish to molest her had had their way—managed by some happy hits, —putting two and two together, as the saying is, or else, really, by earlier information acquired through Boer sources—probably the former,—to impress her hearers and gain credit for superior knowledge of what was taking place outside. She was said to have told those who sought her of reverses encountered by our troops before the intelligence reached the authorities, and to have assured them that "Your Colley will never reach Pretoria!"

Optical delusions.

The curious optical effect sometimes produced by setting or rising stars — like momentary flashes of light, probably from heat-refraction when the stars were rising or sinking in the horizon behind a hill— often led to reports being made that the Boer laager, ten miles away to the west, was answering signals from the camp or town. The same cause gave rise to

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similar suspicions at Standerton; while at Potchefstroom[1] signals like rockets were noticed, due perhaps to like optical delusions.

Spies and traitors in the camp.

That there were spies and traitors, white and black, high and low, in and about the camps, is tolerably certain; but they were held in check, and as far as possible prevented from working serious mischief.[2]

Various dodges were said to have been resorted to to obtain surreptitiously the countersign, so that the cordon of sentries might be passed through; for instance, when the relief or rounds were challenged, the endeavour would be made to approach sufficiently near to overhear the password. It was even surmised that, on occasions, a volunteer had fictitiously placed himself on picket sentry, and boldly challenged and demanded the countersign of any one approaching, or even of an adjoining sentinel; when, having obtained

[1] This is alluded to by Major Montague in his account of "The Defence of Standerton," in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for July and August 1881; and in Colonel Winsloe's "Siege of Potchefstroom," in 'Macmillan's Magazine' for April 1883.

[2] An officer, who from his position was a good deal thrown amongst the civilians and natives, and had good opportunities for forming a sound opinion, writes: "I do not entertain a particle of doubt that the Boers had received more or less notice of our intended attack at the Red House—12th February—just as they received notice of all that we did. Every expedition was, I found, known and discussed in the volunteers' lines long before the regulars had any idea of it. This was one of the peculiar difficulties against which the chiefs had to contend, for it was incident to the very nature of the circumstances, it being impossible to distinguish, even in the highest social grades, whom of the civilians to trust and whom to distrust. . . . The lines were full of traitors, some who 'ran with the hare while holding with the hounds,' but also some who were deliberate spies. . . . It speaks well for the military organisation, with the nests of spies in our midst, we were never surprised, nor any advantage over the garrison gained in any way."

a knowledge of it, he would be enabled to pass through the line of sentries into the town or elsewhere. To prevent an abuse of the countersign, it was sometimes changed in the night, and it was forbidden to utter it in an audible voice to any but the sentry.

Accidents.

In such a rough-and-tumble life, with, to many, unaccustomed work, as the investment necessarily brought, it is not surprising that accidents occurred with firearms, and in other ways. The wonder rather is that, the men being often so mixed in their nationalities, and placed on guard or picket together—sometimes with outer and inner lines of sentries by night—more mistakes giving rise to casualties were not made. The fact, however, that none originated from these causes, shows how constant must have been the care and supervision exercised by those placed over the civilian levies, especially during the earlier part of the war.

Minor injuries.

Of minor injuries, of course, there were plenty—toes, fingers, or limbs suffering in felling wood; in working the mowing, forage-cutting, or corn-crushing machines; or in performance of the numerous heavy duties attending erecting fortified positions, moving heavy stores, &c.; but some accidents of a more serious nature may be noted.

Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Whitley thrown and kicked by his horse.

Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Whitley was thrown from his horse, and kicked in the face. His jaw was greatly injured, and it was some time before he was able to resume his duties. Occurring at the outset, when the Commissariat were hard pressed and

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overworked in bringing in supplies from the town, and making arrangements for provisioning the civil population, this mishap was felt the more by his department.

An artilleryman accidentally shot.

In January, two artillerymen in camp entering into a discussion as to which was the handier to load from, the bandolier or the pouch, proceeded to test the question practically on the spot, with the result that one, in his excitement to gain upon the other, accidentally discharged his carbine, and lodged a bullet in the other's chest. The wounded man lay for some time in a critical condition, but eventually the bullet was extracted and he recovered.

A mounted infantryman and horse drowned.

About the same period, one morning, after a very heavy downpour of several inches of rain in the night, when the streams had become torrents, one of the mounted troop of the 94th Regiment, on cattle-guard, endeavoured to cross the Aapjes river just below the town, in order, it was supposed, to turn back some oxen, when both horse and man were swept down the stream. The body of the man was recovered the following day.

Lieutenant O'Grady injured.

At the beginning of February, Lieutenant O'Grady, commanding the mounted troop of the 94th Regiment, met with a bad accident, which laid him up for the rest of the investment, having broken his leg through slipping off the *stoep*[1] of a hut.

Mr Hendricks accidentally shot.

A fortnight after, Mr Hendricks, formerly armourer-sergeant of the 1st battalion 13th Regiment, but who had taken his discharge and settled as a gunsmith at

[1] Raised terrace in front.

Pretoria, was working for the Ordnance Store Department in camp, when another man, examining the barrel of a rifle, and unaware that it was loaded, exploded it, the bullet striking Mr Hendricks sideways in the stomach, but fortunately passing out again without causing vital injury.

Sergeant Goldie killed by a kick from his horse.

Near the close of the investment, Sergeant Goldie, of Nourse's Horse, was killed by a kick in his chest from his horse. The animal was grazing in a field in the town, when the sergeant going up behind to saddle him and return to camp, he suddenly lashed out with fatal effect. Sergeant Goldie had previously served with the 17th Lancers, and had been wounded in the Zulu campaign.

Losses in horses and mules.

The dreaded horse-sickness season fortunately set in unusually late, and cases only began to be noticed at the commencement of February.[1] Every precaution was taken against its spread; but already, on the 14th February, Colonel Bellairs is found remarking that "the daily decreasing number of effective horses, arising from horse-sickness and war casualties, gradually but surely lessens our power for offensive operations."[2] The losses after that date rapidly increased, until in one week in March they amounted to about 30 horses.

[1] In the 'News of the Camp' of the 10th February there appeared a paragraph, evidently written by Mr Du-Val, which, after alluding to the appearance of this disease, goes on to say: "If there are to be any further reconnaissances or attacks upon the enemy's position in the neighbourhood, it were well that they were done quickly; but a general spread of this disease leaves our troopers horseless, exclaiming with Richard, 'A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!'"

[2] See Appendix N*.

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The number of horses expended in action during the investment was 215, of which 45 were killed or lost in action. Of mules there were 65 expended, of which 21 in action.

Evasions to *commandeering.*

Many attempts at evasion were practised to avoid handing over stores or horses *commandeered*, though generally the merchants and others had acquiesced in the necessity and facilitated the transfer of their property. Fresh raids were occasionally undertaken by Assistant Commissary-General Le Mesurier and his officers, and more provisions found stowed away in hidden places. So also with horses, some of the best having been secreted for a long time, until the requirements of the service obliged greater pressure. The owners, thinking themselves safe, would even sometimes condole with Assistant Commissary-General Walton, who acted as director of remounts, on the increasing scarcity of efficient horses, little knowing that that officer already had information, through native agency, as to the whereabouts of the animals they were holding back, and was merely biding his time to act. One man thus had his horse in a barn, hidden from view by a wall of straw; another kept his pet steed in his grocery store, concealed by piles of boxes of brandy, preserved meat, and Colman's starch. A medical man, who possessed a handsome mare, to disarm suspicion always drove about with a wretched weedy pony, and caused it to be inferred that the mare had previously been parted with and

sent away. A descent was made on the doctor's house; but the assurance was given that no animal was in the stable. This was found correct; but the mare was discovered in the kitchen.

March arrived, and still no communication had reached from outside the Transvaal since Sir George Colley's telegram, *viâ* Kimberley, of the 1st January, notifying that reinforcements were on their way. Neither had anything come in from Potchefstroom or Lydenburg, though all was known to be going on well at Rustenburg and Marabastadt.[1] Beyond frequent patrols and occasional skirmishes in outpost-work, it

March.

[1] From the Colonel Commanding, Transvaal, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Pietermaritzburg.

"PRETORIA, *February* 24, 1881.

"1. I have the honour to transmit for the information of the Major-General Commanding, a further report to the 18th instant, received from 2d Lieutenant Despard, 2d Bn. 21st Foot, Commanding at Rustenburg.

"2. Since my last despatch, dated 14th instant, nothing of particular import has occurred at Pretoria. The enemy still occupy the same position around, and with the same strength as already reported. Wood-cutting, hay-mowing, and cattle-grazing continue in different directions daily, at from two to three miles' distance, under the protection of a small force composed of infantry, artillery, and mounted men. I append lists of those who have succumbed from wounds or disease, as also of the wounded who still remain under treatment in hospital. Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea, 2d Bn. 21st Foot, is progressing favourably. The general health is good. On Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea becoming disabled, I took immediate command of the garrison as well.

"3. I have had no direct information regarding the condition of the 94th wounded at Bronkhorst Spruit, but indirectly I learn that a waggon-load of flour, &c., had been sent to their camp from an adjoining farm.

"4. Similarly, I hear that the rebel Boers have withdrawn from Lydenburg to assist in strengthening the force called up by Piet Joubert to meet the advancing reinforcements coming from Natal."

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had not been thought advisable to carry out any offensive movement against the enemy's positions after the Red House affair, but patiently to bide the time when, relief being at hand, an advantageous sortie might be made and blow struck. The expediency of this course is set forth in Colonel Bellairs's despatch of the 4th March.[1] Allusion is made therein to the

[1] From the Colonel Commanding, Transvaal, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Pietermaritzburg.

"PRETORIA, *March* 4, 1881.

"1. My last despatch was dated 24th February 1881. No official communication has reached Pretoria from Natal or Cape Colony since the telegraphic message sent by Sir George Pomeroy-Colley to his Excellency the Administrator about the 1st January, *viâ* Kimberley, announcing the departure of reinforcements from England and India. Neither has anything been received from the officers commanding at Potchefstroom or Lydenburg, or later than the 12th January from the officer commanding at Marabastadt, though messengers have been several times despatched hence to these places with instructions to return.

"2. I have not considered it expedient to carry out lately further attacks on the enemy's positions around Pretoria, though making reconnaissances occasionally. These expeditions, however successfully conducted, usually result in about a score of casualties each time, and that, too, amongst the men who can least be spared, and with horses that cannot be replaced. The expenditure of 9-pounder gun ammunition has on such occasions been large. The enemy also, on our falling back, can reoccupy the positions temporarily wrested from them. The moral effect on the rebels, of course, remains; but, beyond what has already been done, I feel that I must husband our strength for emergencies which may yet arise, and that I should be scarcely justified in running the risk of being obliged to draw in the lines of defence, and so lose facilities for cattle-grazing, haymaking, &c.

"3. The garrison generally, but especially the regular troops and mounted corps, has been very hard worked since the investment commenced, now nearly three months ago; the 2/21st Foot, for instance, besides heavy day-fatigues, being on guard or outlying night-picket every second or third night. This regiment, having to garrison the hill-forts, furnish signallers, police, and other indispensable garrison duties, and its band working two guns, has only about 130 men left available for guard, with perhaps 40 additional for picket.

"This will further illustrate the difficulty of making offensive move-

inconveniently large expenditure of gun ammunition already incurred, which included about 300 shells. Of rifle ammunition, about 37,000 rounds had been used, but an ample supply remained.

Expenditure of ammunition.

When hostilities were over, it was ascertained that certain natives, who had come in from the other side of the Magaliesberg range, had been systematically sent by the Boers to gather information for them, and to deceive us. In order to induce us to adventure an attack on their strongest position—the Wonderboom Pass—when we should certainly have lost heavily, we were told by these men that they had heard letters read out in the Boer Laager, calling for reinforcements to be despatched to Laing's Nek; and, during successive visits from these natives, the force to guard the Wonderboom was declared to have been reduced in consequence—first, by one party going off

Natives sent by Boers with false information.

ments a day's march out, at the same time protecting the place with its 4000 inhabitants. Fortunately the health of the troops has remained good. Had it proved otherwise, the reduction of effectives might have exercised a serious influence. . . .

"4. It speaks well for the garrison that, although composed of a great mixture of troops—regulars, volunteers, citizens, and natives—not once has there been a false alarm, or, according to South African phraseology, a 'scare'; and this, though the enemy's patrols have approached at night, and shots have occasionally been fired by our sentries.

"5. I have endeavoured, as far as lay in my power, and I trust successfully, to keep all military expenditure within proper limits, and with this object have invited the co-operation of the Local Government. Valuation Boards, consisting of civil officials and gentlemen well acquainted with marketable prices, were, at my request, appointed by his Excellency the Administrator to regulate and fix the value of all horses, cattle, Royal Engineers, commissariat, and ordnance goods seized for the necessities of the garrison and townspeople."

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and then another—until, finally, only twenty men had been left to defend the position!

Falsity of such intelligence proved by reconnaissances made.

Reconnaissances made, however, by Colonel Bellairs early in March, had already sufficiently proved the falsity of the intelligence thus sought to be palmed upon us, and demonstrated that that Boer post was fully held. On the afternoon of the 8th, advantage was taken of a strong cattle-guard being out in the direction of the Wonderboom, to the right of the river running through the pass, to send out a party with guns to reconnoitre to the left of the stream. A dropping fire had been going on between the cattle-guard and the Boer vedettes, when—owing to the approach of the reconnoitring party and an attack appearing imminent—the Boers were soon to be seen swarming up the hill to their defensive positions, behind the rocks and the wall they had built across the gorge. The following day, when a similar reconnaissance was made to the right of the river, a mounted party was sent in advance to scale a Kafir path leading to the crest of the range, about three miles to the right of the pass. They had not proceeded far when they encountered a fire, and a party of Boers were seen to be in readiness there also, to dispute any attempt to gain the top or move along the hills from that quarter. The range of our guns was then tested for future use; it being at this period thought that the Boers, after being driven back by Sir George Colley, might retreat in this direction, and form behind the Magaliesberg.

Besides ordinary risks from fire, the danger always existed that a night-attack might be attempted, in combination with firing the buildings, &c., by some disaffected civilians and Boer sympathisers, or possibly natives in the camp, when great consternation and alarm would have arisen among the women and children, with probably a stampede of the horses and oxen.

Risks from fire.

There was much combustible stuff about—wooden stores and sheds, hay and forage ricks; and the huts, although built of stone, had, many of them, low, thatched roofs. A quantity of powder—some for blasting purposes, belonging to the merchants—also dynamite, sufficient to have destroyed the camp,—was stored in a central building, unsuited for such a purpose.

Even the elements at this season—thunderstorms being of frequent occurrence—contributed to render the situation more dangerous. A house in the town, one night at the end of December, was struck by lightning and burnt.

To guard as much as possible against these dangers, extraordinary precautions were taken. Fire-engines were kept in constant practice and readiness—the pickets to work them sleeping alongside. Buckets, with water, were placed round the thatched huts, hay-ricks, hospital marquees, &c., with tarpaulins at hand, to spread over and smother any incipient fire. Smoking was prohibited in the immediate vicinity of the ordnance and the commissariat stores, hospital marquees, and hay-ricks; and general cautions were

Precautions adopted.

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issued regarding the use of matches and lights—all with such good effect that only one accident of any consequence occurred: the wall of a hospital marquee, with some wounded inside, was discovered on fire, but immediately put out.

When, in March, a rumour—untraceable, like many others, at the time to its origin—spread that Potchefstroom had fallen, and that the Boers were moving the two captured guns to attack Pretoria, it was decided to be on the side of caution, and take timely steps to construct a safer magazine for the gunpowder and other explosives. The Royal Engineers, accordingly, set about building one under the glacis or slope outside the camp to the south.

Camp newspaper.

A little paper, entitled 'News of the Camp'—got up by Messrs Du-Val & Deecker, with the loan of type and machinery from the 'Transvaal Argus' office, that journal having suspended its publication—was allowed to be printed and published, under a mild censorship, in the camp. The first number appeared on Christmas Day; and it continued to come out, twice or thrice a-week, until it had reached its fortieth number at the beginning of April, by which time the civil population had returned to the town. The dearth of news amongst such a confined community, and want of fresh topics to write about after the first few weeks had passed, and the novelty attending the situation had worn off, must have sorely taxed the editor's powers in filling his paper. Attacks on the enemy's positions could not be got up for every edition, to give

scope to Mr Du-Val's varied talents with pen and rifle; but occasionally a flag of truce would come in, bringing material for reflection and dissertation—Boer Government 'Gazettes' and the Orange Free State 'De Express,' giving details of the successive reverses experienced by Sir George Colley, with extracts from the English newspapers, showing which way "the straws were setting." The open-air concerts and theatricals, too, gave congenial opportunities for description and pleasant criticism. Births there were, and deaths also, to record, but no marriages; though gossip had it that several "were arranged" during this exciting period, in the intervals of more pressing military duty.

Photography.

Mr Gros—to whom we have already alluded[1] as having rendered good service in photographing despatches and orders in microscopic form, for transmission by native messengers—made many very interesting photographic sketches of various camp scenes, and groups of officers and men, during the investment. When hostilities were over, and the Boers flocked into the town, this gentleman was carrying on a large business in supplying departing friends with reminiscences of the siege, and taking the portraits of our former enemies,—so much so, that his supply of chemicals and other photographic materials soon became exhausted, and work had to be given up until fresh stores could be obtained from Durban. Some of the Boer commandants taken were fine, good-looking men, and presented a very effective appearance in

[1] See *ante*, p. 171.

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their martial equipment of rifle and bandolier. Both Assistant Commandant-General Hendrick Schoeman and Commandant Henning Pretorius, of the Red House and Elandsfontein Laagers respectively, came up to this description.

Administration of martial law.

A German gentleman, speaking at a "banquet" given in the town in honour of his Emperor's birthday, remarked upon the successful way in which the military authorities had enforced martial law without having had recourse to harsh measures, and humorously added that he did not feel sure if, had he been placed in similar circumstances in his own country, he might not have been sentenced to be shot several times over for minor *étourderies* or what not. This gentleman, of course, fulfilled his duties, and had nothing to fear from the effects of martial law as administered by us; but took in good part the inevitable curtailment of individual liberty its enaction involved. But it was far from being so with all, though, fortunately, the irreconcilables were in a considerable minority. Nevertheless, as time went by, they became more numerous, discontented, demonstrative, and troublesome to deal with. Many belonging to this category were among those who had clamoured for the imposition of martial law before its introduction, and who now found its working not altogether to their liking.[1] With some other classes

[1] Mr Du-Val thus wrote on this subject in the 'News of the Camp':—

"*Martial Law, what it means.*—Before the town of Pretoria was abandoned, several meetings were held, at which resolutions were passed

—the disloyal and the evil-doers—martial law continued to exercise its full influence. Had it not been so, much mischief must have arisen from the former, and loss of property from the latter.

urging upon the Government the desirability of proclaiming martial law. The authorities, however, refused to resort to such an extremity until force of circumstances compelled them to do so. Some of the men who were foremost in clamouring for martial law would now gladly eat their words and beg for a resumption of the former state of affairs, if they thought there was the slightest chance of the plea being successful. They knew not what they asked, but they are being speedily taught, for every day furnishes fresh evidence of the marked contrast there is between the liberty of the subject (both in words and deeds) now, and what it was in the very worst days of our Crown Colony rule. We do not for a moment complain ourselves, nor do we think there are many who can really find any fault at the treatment they receive at the hands of the military authorities. It may be that some of our citizens have been placed in positions they ought not to have occupied, and that, acting on the principle that 'kissing goes by favour,' they have looked to the comfort of their friends before some others who are probably more deserving. But every man has his remedy. The commandant of the garrison is ever ready to pay particular attention to any just cause of complaint, whether it be a case of favouritism on the part of a ward-master, or over-officiousness on that of any other officer. On the charge being laid, the best of them will be brought to book, and if they are not able to give a good account of their stewardship, they will be suitably rewarded. Under martial law all are treated alike. There may be a few cases which are not properly reported to the authorities, but whatever there may have been in the way of dereliction of duty it certainly cannot be laid at the doors of the military. If they ever err—and we suppose as mortals they sometimes do—it is rather in an opposite direction. But to those who have been so desirous of understanding what martial law is, we have to recommend the study of the following extract from general orders. If they are apt to learn at all, it will not be long before they know something about their favourite subject. We would also remind them that they cannot go to town or return to camp without a pass, which can only be obtained if they are not wanted by their ward-master ; that there are only two points of ingress or egress to the camp ; that they are all of them soldiers without having taken the shilling ; and that if they have wives they have been practically divorced from them for three weeks. Such is martial law. Yet withal, men, women, and children appear to be much more happy and contented than they might be expected to be under the circumstances. Men take

CHAP. III. — Provost-Marshal.

The Deputy Provost-Marshal—Captain Campbell, who also commanded the company of the 94th Regiment which garrisoned Fort Royal—had a difficult task in maintaining order generally, preventing the sale of liquor, and protecting the deserted town against marauders; the inhabitants, too, frequently leaving their property insufficiently secured. He required the judicious and cool head he possessed to enable him, whilst perhaps watching or overawing suspected persons, to guard himself against giving too ready credence to the excited accusations which were always being advanced, even by some high in station or position, against certain men and women of known Boer leanings.

Formerly a provost-marshal could be invested with power to punish summarily any person caught red-handed; but the Army Discipline Act—then only recently become law—had altered all that, and the onus of investigating each case, when punishment was required by court-martial or otherwise, was now thrown on the officer commanding the troops, as if an officer in such a position in time of war had not already more than enough to occupy him, without this additional clog upon his energies, distracting his attention from more serious matters. In order to afford some relief from this cumbrous course of action

well to soldiering, the ladies do their afternoon calls as naturally as if they were in town, and the children find the mud of the camp quite as conducive to health and a clear complexion as any dust-heap they ever played on in their lives. Sickness is happily a rare occurrence, and the rate of mortality is as low, if not lower, than it has ever been known to be in the city from which we have recently fled. This is the best side of the picture."

—wholly unsuited to the situation, and which would appear to have been dictated by persons who could never have had any real acquaintance with the difficulties attending the execution of martial law in a non-European country—the Landdrost's Court was continued, to enable that magistrate to inquire into cases against civilians or natives, when of a non-military character, under the summary powers he possessed, to inflict six months' imprisonment and—with natives—twenty lashes.

Police.

The Deputy Provost-Marshal had at first only a few white men and natives acting under him as police; but later, this body was increased by the addition of some specially selected volunteers. The selling of liquor, unless at the garrison canteens, or with special permits in each case, was prohibited, but found very difficult to stop in the midst of a population, civilians and soldiers, so mixed up. All were forbidden to leave the military lines or enter the town without passes. Heavy work, no doubt, contributed to indispose many breaking through this restriction; but the severe punishments inflicted and examples made of those who were caught seeking liquor or plunder had still more effect, and the loss of property was not great or anything to be surprised at.[1] The only robbery of any consequence was one

Gold robbery.

[1] District Order by Colonel Bellairs, C.B. :—

"PRETORIA, *3d January* 1881.

"Complaints have reached the ears of the Colonel commanding, of depredations having been committed on the property of inhabitants since they removed from the town, and that volunteers and others, under pretence that they were acting under authority, have demanded

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which took place in the camp. The manager of the Cape Commercial Bank had, at his own risk, placed ten boxes of gold-dust, of the value of about £4000 each, in one of the provost cells, in which the dynamite was locked up. At the close of the investment, the boxes were removed, without being counted, to the bank's premises in the town. It was then discovered that one of the boxes was missing. An investigation and search following, it transpired that some artillerymen had been seen in possession and endeavouring to dispose of nuggets of gold; and a considerable quantity, about one-half, was recovered, being found in a water-tank outside the provost building, or in other places. A dozen men were taken into custody; but a conviction could not be obtained for want of direct evidence.

Jail prisoners.

Besides ordinary malefactors—white and black—detained in the civil jail, there were the chief Sekukuni and his family. When peace came they were released, with the acquiescence of the Boer Government; but poor Sekukuni, on his way back to his former district, discovered, to his cost—for he was soon after murdered—that his tribe had been broken up, and, other chiefs having entered into possession of his country, his return was opposed. Mr Celliers, the

from servants left in charge of private premises, and taken for their own use, articles of produce, poultry, &c.

"Colonel Bellairs trusts that any inhabitants who have so suffered will endeavour to identify such marauders and lodge complaints against them to the Deputy Provost-Marshal, when, on sufficient proof, the offenders will be rigorously dealt with."

editor of the 'Volksstem'—who had, prior to hostilities, been sentenced to a month's imprisonment for sedition—was made to undergo that judgment as a civil prisoner, afterwards returning to the Civil Laager. Several were arrested on suspicion of sedition at the commencement of hostilities; but as the officer commanding the troops declined, in the absence of sufficient evidence, to allow of their detention as Provost-Marshal's prisoners, they were released. One man was, however, detained in prison by the local Government throughout the whole period of investment without trial. CHAP. III.

Mrs Jorrisen and Mrs Bok under surveillance.

The wives of Dr Jorrisen, State Attorney, and Mr Bok, State Secretary to the Boer Government, and their families, were among others accommodated in the Jail Laager. An offer had been made to these ladies that they should quit the town for Heidelberg, and conveyance to the adjoining Boer Laager had been proffered, but they preferred to remain. They then, on the withdrawal of the inhabitants from the town, took up their residence at a house in the Botanical Gardens—only so in name—a mile to the west of the camp; but as there they could easily have communicated with the enemy outside, they were ordered in, when they selected the Jail Laager as their place of residence. At the conclusion of the peace negotiations, they rejoined their husbands at Heidelberg. At first, when in the Jail Laager, they were under supervision as to their movements; but Colonel Bellairs, learning that this was found irksome and annoying by them, called on the ladies, and, on

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the understanding that they would not abuse the indulgence, ordered the removal of all restrictions, and that they should be allowed into the town the same as others, without being watched or followed.

No unnecessary alarms.

It speaks well for the motley garrison that, though numbers of those taking part in the defence then shouldered a rifle for the first time, from the beginning to the end of the investment there had been nothing approaching to a general alarm or "scare," such as occurred more than once to the troops on the march to Ulundi, when guns and regiments opened fire on an imaginary foe, and pickets stampeded without cause. Now and then one heard of a few shots having been fired at some approaching object, declared the following morning to have been only a stray donkey, but no alarm or turn-out was occasioned. Once or twice intelligence came in at night of large Boer patrols in the vicinity visiting Skinner's Farm, two miles to the west of the camp, and a portion of the garrison on that front stood to their arms; but no general night turn-out ever occurred, neither was there any camp alarm or disorder.[1] The farm referred to had been allowed to be continued in occupation by Mr Skinner, as he was considered perfectly loyal, and the produce from his dairy was beneficial to the camp; but some suspicion was perhaps entertained against him on account of his wife being a sister of Commandant Henning Pretorius of Elandsfontein, a few miles further west.

[1] See *ante*, note, p. 209.

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Numerous baboons were occasionally seen on the Magaliesberg range and spurs. Their activity, and the regular manner in which they would perform their outpost duty, throwing out sentries here and there, would sometimes deceive even military eyes, aided by glasses, into the belief that these creatures were Boers assembling together, seemingly in great excitement, for purposes of attack, and reports would be made accordingly.

Baboon mistaken for Boer movements.

Some amusing incidents were related at the time—though we fail now to call to mind more than one or two—attending the sentry-work by night, when the countersign had to be demanded. The performance of their duties by men imperfectly acquainted with the English language, and not fully understanding the military instructions given to them—perhaps, also, not over proficient in the handling of their rifles—would often occasion danger to others. An officer was nearly shot by a volunteer who would insist on his roaring out the countersign at 300 yards' distance. It was necessary to employ some of the native drivers on armed duties around the transport laagers by night. It was explained that they should challenge all approaching their posts, then demand that one should advance and give the countersign. One night when "Tuesday" was the countersign, Hendrik Pinto was on duty for the first time. Soon a step was heard approaching: "Oo-kom-da?" shouted Hendrik; "just stop da, or I shoot yer quick." "Friend!" cried out the invisible individual, getting a little nervous as to his reception. "Ah!" said the zealous sentry, "then

Vagaries of sentries.

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you just kom 'longside 'o me and say 'Toosday,' that's all." Some of the soldiers took special delight in lying in wait for an unfortunate doctor, returning after dark from visiting some civilian patients. He occasionally would have to run the gauntlet of several, who would wait until he was close up, and then suddenly scare him by coming down to the charge, with bayonet within an inch of his breast, at the same time demanding the countersign in a stentorian voice.

The ration reduced.

Native reports—which, not being favourable to us, were the less likely to have been manufactured, and therefore the more entitled to credence—coming in during the second week in March, foreshadowing the Majuba disaster and the death of Sir George Colley on the 27th February, Colonel Bellairs considered it prudent—the period for relief arriving being yet further delayed—to direct that all male adults should be placed on a reduced scale of ration from the 14th March.

Change of position effected by a Boer laager.

On the morning of the 15th, much excitement was occasioned by the appearance, seven to eight miles to the west, of a long column of mounted Boers, escorting between forty to fifty waggons, the foremost carrying a large standard, coming, apparently, from the Potchefstroom road, crossing the Elandsfontein valley, and making for a gap in the Daas Poort range of hills. Various were the conjectures as to what it could mean. Some said it was the funeral procession of a great man, who was being taken to his farm to be buried alongside others of his family. Others

supposed that they were Boers returning from Laing's Nek, the war, from some cause, being over; and soon, a horseman being signalled as approaching with a flag of truce, lent colour to this idea. But many only saw before them a favourable opportunity for attacking the column. These excitable individuals, having no educated military eye, pictured the enemy attacked in the position and formation in which they then beheld them—drawn out in long procession—and so falling an easy prey to vigorous onslaught. That it would take about three hours for any adequate force sent out to cover the seven or eight intervening miles, before a serious blow could be struck, was not thought of by these irresponsible-airy persons; or that, in the interval, reinforcements would have assembled—being no doubt in readiness to do so—from every quarter, and the waggons have been safely disposed of over the hill. In fact, while our other attacks had been initiated under cover of darkness, and the Boer reinforcements had been unable to arrive until after the attack had been delivered, in this case the advance would have had to have been made in broad daylight, and, so to speak, our intention to attack notified to all the Boer laagers around, when their reinforcements would have been able to hang on our flanks and dispute the advance all the way out! Indeed, about this period, much play was very improperly given to irresponsible opinion as to what ought to have been done, and the supposed want of offensive action on the part of the officer commanding—unfortunately often unchecked,

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but rather the reverse by some who had the opportunity of controlling it, but preferred for reasons of their own to allow such a feeling to spread.[1]

The Boer waggons soon disappeared through the gap over the ridge, and the enemy then developed their intention of occupying this fresh position, by throwing up schanzes and defences. It was afterwards ascertained that the party belonged to the Elandsfontein Laager, which was thus removed for sanitary causes. The strength of this laager, in wag-

[1] An attempt was subsequently made in certain quarters,—from motives which only those behind the scenes can appreciate at their proper value,—to disparage the defence made at Pretoria, and detract from the services of the officer commanding—Brigadier-General Bellairs—but, fortunately, without the result hoped for. That officer was knighted and received the insignia of the Order of St Michael and St George at the hands of her Majesty, for the services he had rendered to the State; and the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief caused it to be intimated to him that—"His Royal Highness has carefully considered all the matters connected with the period referred to, and has arrived at the conclusion that so far from any blame being attributable in conducting the defence, you have merited great commendation for the way in which a very anxious duty was performed, and the defence carried out, and his Royal Highness is gratified to be enabled to express his approval of your conduct."

This ill-will,—the evil effects of which were thus so happily frustrated, through the Duke of Cambridge's habitual love of justice,—was in curious contrast to the spontaneous cheers with which the troops—the Royal Scots Fusiliers—greeted and bid farewell to their Brigadier-General, when quitting his command, and filing past him on the evacuation of Pretoria.

It has been well said—"It is incalculable how far light inventions, judicious ridicule, hints and innuendoes may work on a dawning half-grown predilection. Honest people are more or less at the mercy of the unscrupulous, and must be so to the world's end."

Thus even a straightforward, well-intentioned "special correspondent," while endeavouring to arrive at the truth, may be "got at," and influenced by the above means; and, regarding his informants as the "best authority" as to what their information implied, may work injustice to an individual.

gons and men, was now seen to be about treble that estimated in Colonel Bellairs's despatch of the 6th February, showing how little reliable information was forthcoming on such matters.

Flag of truce sent in with news of an armistice.

Meanwhile the messenger bearing the white flag having arrived at the outposts, three miles out, sent in a letter addressed to Colonel Bellairs by Assistant Commandant-General Schoeman, commanding at the Red House Laager, which announced that an armistice had been concluded, for eight days from the 6th March, between Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood and Commandant-General Joubert, and enclosed a copy of its conditions. This was accompanied by some Boer Government 'Gazettes' and the Orange Free State 'De Express.' These papers confirmed the native reports of Sir George Colley's death, gave details of the Ingogo and Majuba fights, a summary of a Transvaal debate in the House of Commons, and leaders from the 'Times' and other London papers—

English opinion on the war.

the study of which seemed to show that the imperial Government and general opinion in England had inclined towards peace since the second week in January, and that the fighting which had afterwards taken place had been unnecessary and might have been avoided. It was also recognised, for the first time, how strong was the feeling of the Dutch-speaking population of the Cape Colony and Orange Free State in favour of the Boer movement in the Transvaal for independence, and how greatly that feeling must influence the imperial Government towards listening to proposals calculated to

Feeling of the Dutch population of Cape Colony and Orange Free State.

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bring about a peace and prevent an extension of the war.

How the news was received in camp.

A careful perusal of all the papers thus sent in, together with the fact of an armistice having been concluded for preliminary negotiations, led thoughtful men to form the opinion that peace was already a foregone conclusion, and that it only remained to settle the terms, and how best to carry them out compatibly with the dignity of England. But, though a few reflecting and reasonable persons foresaw such a termination at hand, certainly no one, at this time, anticipated that peace would be brought about or carried out quite in the manner it soon afterwards was. The most moderate conjectured that, though no more serious fighting was likely to take place, yet that the British general would at least make a military promenade and entry, at the head of his troops, into the capital of the Transvaal. They were scarcely prepared to see him—as they did shortly afterwards—in order to reach Pretoria, condescending to scamper alone through the country under Boer sufferance.

Altogether, the news brought by the Boer messenger—the confirmation of the further reverses suffered on the borders of Natal, the death of Sir George Colley, and the near prospect of what, from an English standpoint, was viewed as an unsatisfactory termination of the war—was received with dismay, and caused general depression throughout the camp, with all but those actually sympathising with the Boer cause. This could not be wondered at, since

to the majority of the volunteers and townspeople it implied that all their efforts and sacrifices during the war had been fruitless, and that shortly, when the act of annexation would be annulled, they would find themselves ruined, and forced to seek a living elsewhere.

Strong political feeling.

An uneasy feeling now began to spread amongst the classes we have just referred to, gradually increasing in intensity, and exhibiting itself in various ways. The majority were unable to understand the causes which had led to the sudden change in policy of the Government, and were disposed to vent their irritation on any siding with the views of the latter, or who might have leanings in favour of the Boer cause. There was no longer the same cordial feeling felt towards the military; the animosity borne against the imperial Government, on account of the turn affairs had taken, being, in some measure, reflected on the troops, as in a way representing the Government.[1] When the volunteers were disbanded, and the townspeople returned to their houses, no address was

[1] An officer, speaking on this subject, tells us: "I had duty both in the lines of the mounted volunteers and the Convent Redoubt, where were the infantry volunteers. In the former, where I had hitherto always met with the greatest respect, I now encountered the greatest rudeness and the grossest insubordination, simply because my uniform of a British officer represented an obnoxious Government. So bad was the conduct of the men under their grievous disappointment and disgust, that I feared a riot between them and the regulars. Near the convent I saw several officers hissed, and made the subject of insulting cries and remarks; and on my approach to a party of volunteers, some of them were beginning similarly to attack me, but were checked by others, solely because I had been in a position to do them many little kindnesses."

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presented or thanks voted to the troops for the uniform courtesy and kind treatment they had experienced at their hands—from the Colonel commanding to the private soldier. The absence of some such recognition of the obligations they were under was the more marked perhaps in the case of the senior medical officer, from whom — not having to carry out any distasteful restrictions or discipline connected with the administration of martial law—they, and especially their families, could only have received gratuitous care and benefits. This divergence in feeling, solely arising from political causes, was further shown in an endeavour to raise a civilian fund, apart from and without seeking the co-operation of the military at first, towards the erection of a monument to their fallen comrades.

A three months' state of siege, with its many irksome restraints, was vexatious enough; but now, with half rations and a chronic state of mild hunger to contend against, it became much more unendurable, rendering some disposed to become restive. The volunteers were not altogether so amenable to discipline; and Nourse's Horse — composed of more devil-may-care materials—got out of hand. As additional news came in, and it was slowly realised by these men that they would soon be cast adrift for their living—how or where to be obtained many knew not—their discontent increased, culminating, when peace was announced, in an outburst of wrath, fortunately with no worse result than burning Mr Gladstone in effigy, amid fervid utterances that the whole of the

Ministry might soon become tenants in a certain warm place.

Final order of the day.

As the end drew near, Colonel Bellairs issued, on the 22d March—earlier than otherwise he might have done—through wishing to allay the general impatience exhibiting itself—the following district order, reviewing succinctly the situation of the several garrisons in the Transvaal under his command, and complimenting and thanking the garrison and people of Pretoria for their exceptionally brilliant conduct during three months' state of siege :—

"PRETORIA, 22*d March* 1881.

"Three months passed in a state of siege has not damped the courage and determination of the brave little garrisons of Potchefstroom, Rustenburg, Marabastadt, and Lydenburg, widely isolated and closely invested though they be. According to information which has reached the Colonel commanding, these posts continue to hold their own as confidently as at the beginning of hostilities, and with uniform success to beat off the enemy's attacks with slight loss to themselves.

"The garrison and people—men, women, and children—of Pretoria, during this lengthened period of trouble and suspense, have behaved with remarkable coolness and endurance. Their situation is almost unique. Rarely indeed has a whole town been called upon to abandon its dwellings and withdraw to a military camp, and well have the inhabitants in this case responded and acquitted themselves of the grievous task imposed upon them by the stern necessities of this war. The troops, largely composed of volunteers, have performed excellent service, each encounter telling its tale of greater loss inflicted on the enemy than on themselves.

"The Colonel commanding now calls upon all to bear for

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a short time longer the privation, discomfort, and suspense attending their present situation, in the assurance that their deeds will hereafter live in the memories of their children and countrymen, and that, though for the moment cut off, they are certainly not forgotten by England, who has such good reason to be proud of her sons and daughters in this land.

"Colonel Bellairs begs that all classes, and especially those officers, civil and military, who have had the onerous duty of supervising and organising the successful arrangements carried through during this war, will accept his hearty thanks for the cordial co-operation given by all."

Cessation of active hostilities.

After the notification of the conclusion of an armistice had been received—on the 15th—no further offensive movements were made on either side, though the usual scouting and patrol duties were continued, and the same watch kept up. Arrangements were entered into with the Boer general to allow letters to pass, subject to their being left open for inspection. All seemed to portend that the war would soon be over, and in another fortnight the close of the investment came.

Peace notified.

On the evening of the 28th March, three officers—Lieutenants Ryder, of the 60th Rifles, and Cunninghame and Menzies, of the 92d Highlanders—accompanied by three guides, rode into the camp, having come from Mount Prospect, Sir Evelyn Wood's camp, in four days. They delivered a *précis* of the terms of the agreement of peace entered into, which, being published the next morning, was immediately followed by an order from Colonel Bellairs, authorising the inhabitants to go back to the town, and directing

that the garrison should return to its normal peace condition.[1] Transport was offered to enable all the people to convey their chattels to their homes, and the Commissariat was ordered to continue the issue of rations through the ward-masters. The Civil Guard was dissolved, and directions given for the gradual disbandment of the several volunteer corps. Martial law ceased, and the civil authorities resumed their former powers and functions.

Observations on the defence and its results.

So ended the defence, not without honour to British arms accruing therefrom, prestige which should not be forgotten because of want of success elsewhere and the unsatisfactory nature of the peace

[1] District Order by Colonel Bellairs, C.B. :—

"PRETORIA, 29*th March* 1881.

"With reference to the Government notice published this morning, hostilities having ceased, and peace having been proclaimed between Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood, K.C.B., and Commandant-General Joubert, the various garrisons in this district will return to the normal peace condition.

"The inhabitants of Pretoria are at liberty to return to the town, the Commissariat Department for the present providing for the issue of rations through the ward-masters.

"Transport will be given through the ward-masters to enable all to return to their homes.

"The Civil Guard will be dissolved ; the commandant thereof returning all arms and ammunition into the colonial stores.

"Arrangements will be made for the gradual disbanding of the Pretoria Carbineers, the Pretoria Rifles, and Nourse's Horse ; the officers commanding these corps being responsible that all arms, ammunition, &c., belonging to Government be returned into store.

"The officer commanding the garrison will be good enough to give the necessary directions for facilitating the above, and to see that all Government property is duly returned into store or otherwise taken care of."

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negotiations then being hurried through. The fact that the capital, the seat of the British Government in the Transvaal, was retained to the last, was something to be proud of, and should not have been without influence in strengthening the hands of those busy arranging the terms for peace.

It has been wrongfully asserted that the town, when evacuated, was left defenceless. To have established additional forts, with stationary garrisons, on the distant chain of hills to the north or elsewhere of the town, or to have occupied and held some of the more defensible houses in the town, with limited range and observation, would not have answered the desired object, but have had merely the effect of weakening the number of reliable men held in hand ready for emergency and attack. Not only was the town protected both by day and night, through the means taken to ensure the garrison being forewarned, in time, of any approach of the enemy, and by the concentration and preparedness of the troops themselves to thrust back attack, but the enemy was, the whole time, kept at bay from six to twelve miles all round. Surely this was in itself a satisfactory achievement. Long marches were also occasionally made to attack the Boer positions in the country,—to even greater distances than that gone over by the force which left Mount Prospect camp, and fought on the line of communications at Ingogo. The foes met with on these occasions were of the same material as encountered by Sir George Colley, and exhibited no lack of courage, combativeness, or activity. They

fought well, and attacked intelligently when they had the opportunity, throughout the campaign; but the wariness, prudence, preparedness — call it what you will—of the garrison, afforded few opportunities for their attacking with advantage. Thus there resulted few losses, and the garrison remained in a condition fitted to prove of service to an advancing relief column, whenever it should—as was expected—approach. The same may be said of the other Transvaal garrisons—including that of Potchefstroom, until it became incapacitated through want of food. No disaster or serious reverse occurred to any of them. The defence of the several Transvaal garrisons forms the bright part of an otherwise unsuccessful campaign.

Arrival of Commandant-General Joubert.

The day following the receipt of the notification of peace having been made, Commandant-General Joubert, accompanied by an escort of mounted Boers —men and horses looking of the roughest description, and exhibiting plentiful signs of hard usage—came in, and had an interview with the Administrator and officer commanding the troops. The Commandant-General's manner was as unpretending as his appearance—at first a little nervous, as if doubtful as to how he might be received; but Colonel Bellairs coming forward to shake his hand and offering him a seat, he pleasantly entered into conversation, partly with the aid of an interpreter. As he said he was going on to Potchefstroom, he was asked to inquire for some mail-bags, from the Cape and England, which were believed to have been detained there

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since the post-cart had ceased to run, — a request which the Commandant-General soon afterwards complied with, the bags, containing many opened letters, being brought in the following week by a farmer. Armed bodies of Boers having been signalled as in movement, apparently with the intention of entering the town, Colonel Bellairs arranged with the Commandant-General that such parties should pass outside, as he was apprehensive that, in the then excited state of feeling of many of the townspeople, a collision might ensue in the absence of any controlling power, — martial law being no longer in force, and no sufficient civil police available.

Attitude of the townspeople.

In a day or two people became calmer, and more concerned in looking after their own changed affairs and immediate future. They began to feel that their quarrel now should be less with the Boers than with the imperial Government, who, they considered, had deceived them, not yet understanding that the action of the Government had, in the main, been brought about by the false position in which it had been placed, consequent on the misleading reports made, and errors committed, by their *employés* in the country.

Boers return to the town.

In this quieter mood, Boer waggons arriving from the distant farms round about, with the supplies most wanted, were very welcome, and the market-place quickly reassumed its former aspect. The church in the centre of the square, so long closed, now also reopened, and was largely attended by the Boers

and their families for the *Nachtmaal*. Generally, all were very quiet and unassuming in manner, the only difference observable from former times being the large number who wore mourning; but whether caused by losses they were unwilling to own to, or on account of the close relationship existing among them, was not clear.

Distress in the town.

By the 4th April it had been notified that the supplies reaching the town were sufficient for the inhabitants, and the issue of free rations by the Commissariat Department then ceased. A civil committee was, however, found necessary for the relief of distressed persons, of whom there were many. Steps were taken to remove such men, with their families, to Natal, where they might be better able to obtain employment, the assistance of military transport being given for the purpose. Numbers of men who had been receiving high pay as volunteers had laid nothing by, but spent all in drink. It is to be feared that the more respectable habits enforced upon this class during their residence in camp, were soon laid aside when the pressure of discipline was removed, and that these men relapsed into their previous disreputable condition of life — as canteen loafers.[1]

[1] One who wrote under the designation of "A Stroller" in the camp paper, about a fortnight before the investment was over, thus expresses himself:—

"We have now been settled down in camp so long, and become so accustomed to the life, that I really believe there are many amongst us who will be sorry when the present state of affairs comes to a close, and we have to occupy our houses and find the wherewithal to keep body and soul together again. In some respects, too, camp life will have

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Sir Owen Lanyon recalled.

But few incidents remain to be touched upon. Sir Owen Lanyon was recalled, and Colonel Bellairs—who had been promoted on the 25th March to be a Brigadier-General—was directed by Lord Kimberley to assume the administration of the Transvaal Government in his place. Sir Evelyn Wood visited Pretoria on the 6th April, but returned to Natal three days later. A lottery had been got up in the camp in February—the winner of which was to be he who drew the date on which Sir George Colley or his representative should appear with the long-expected relief-column. The advent of Sir Evelyn Wood, though heralded by artillery salutes and guards of honour, was considered as scarcely coming within the original intentions of the subscribers, and it was ultimately decided to add the amount to a fund being raised for the erection of a memorial to those who had fallen in the defence of the military posts in

done all the good in the world to a class of men who before were subject to no restriction, and had, through their own bad habits, and the example of others more dissolute than themselves, gradually developed into that low and depraved state so well described in South Africa by the designation canteen loafer. These men were formerly unknown as customers by the several storekeepers, and when they did venture into their establishments, they were carefully watched, and their exit was looked upon in the light of a relief. However, it is not so with them now. The regular and cleanly habits made compulsory upon them has with many of them brought about a complete reformation. They appear dressed as well as most other respectable men now, and are received with a gracious welcome by the storekeepers, for they are evidently not lack of money; hence their custom is courted, and they receive the attention due to them. It is to be hoped that the men to whom allusion is made will not fall back into their old paths again, but on the other hand, they will become the respectable members of society nature has in every way fitted them to be."

the Transvaal.[1] The fund received by the ex-volunteers and civilians being found inadequate for the purpose, the co-operation of the military was sought some months later, prior to the evacuation of Pretoria. This was at once afforded; and, at the suggestion of Brigadier-General Bellairs, it was determined, at a meeting of the subscribers, to endeavour to erect a suitable memorial in St Paul's Cathedral.[2] The consent of the Dean and Chapter was subsequently obtained to placing the monument in the crypt.

Health of the garrison.

Taking into consideration the heavy duties performed and the exposure endured—latterly on short rations—the health of the troops and volunteers was good throughout. When the news arrived — the middle of March—that peace negotiations were in progress, there were between eighty and ninety patients under treatment in hospital, about sixteen of whom were for wounds received in action.

Health of the civil population.

As regards the civil population, although a few deaths had taken place from natural causes, there had been no general sickness. The arrangements for the care of the women and children had been such that, when hostilities were over, they returned to their homes in more robust health than when originally, they left them for the camps.

Casualties.

The casualties of the garrison had been between fifty and sixty, of whom seventeen had been killed or died of their wounds—a small loss for the brilliant

[1] See *ante*, p. 228.

[2] See Appendix P.

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result gained: the capital of the province saved from falling into the hands of the enemy.

Closing despatch.

The distinguished conduct of the officers and men forming the garrison of Pretoria, as well as those belonging to the other military posts in the Transvaal, was brought to the notice of the higher authorities in a closing despatch from Colonel Bellairs, dated 31st March, 1881.[1]

[1] From Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the Chief of the Staff.

"PRETORIA, *March* 31, 1881.

"1. The termination of a long and arduous state of siege having arrived, a period of over three months of unceasing vigilance at Pretoria, and at all the forts in the Transvaal, during which the troops never took off their clothes, and slept at their posts, it will probably be deemed a fitting time for me to bring prominently to the notice of the Major-General commanding the names of those officers who have so largely contributed to the successes gained, and the fine spirit with which the several positions have been held.

"2. Of my second in command, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, 2-21st Foot, I have already had occasion to speak several times, and markedly in my despatch of the 14th February, with reference to the action in which he was wounded. I venture to express the hope that this officer, who has long service for the rank he holds, may receive both promotion and honour, so well merited.

"3. Major Le Mesurier, R.E., has exhibited great ability in improvising and arranging for the defences of Pretoria, as well as judgment and tact in managing the body of Volunteers he has had charge of, in addition to his engineer duties.

"4. The fact that the senior Commissariat officer, Assistant Commissary-General Le Mesurier, has been able successfully to feed 4000 men, women, and children, beyond the ordinary garrison, and large numbers of horses, mules, and cattle, for such a lengthened period, speaks for itself.

"5. The Transport Branch, the Remount and Sick-horse Depot, and the Native Labour Corps, were efficiently organised under Assistant Commissary-General Walton, who is a very deserving officer of superior abilities.

"6. Under Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Markwick, the Ordnance Store Branch has been admirably worked. Arms and stores of every

description had to be seized and adapted to the requirements of the large body of civilians thrown suddenly under military charge. Mr Markwick on all occasions gave me every satisfaction. He is one of the best Ordnance Store officers I have met with.

"7. Captain O'Brien, as District Paymaster in the Transvaal, has, under largely increased responsibilities, efficiently performed his duties.

"8. All the hospital arrangements, both for civilians and military, have been most thoughtfully cared for. Brigade-Surgeon Skeen is a thoroughly practical organiser in his line, and a skilful surgeon, inspiring every confidence. He has been ably seconded in every way by Surgeon-Major Comerford.

"9. Captain Churchill, 58th Foot, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, has had heavy and responsible duties, and by his zeal and attention to their performance merits recognition.

"10. Lieut. Hon. A. Hardinge, 2-21st Foot, acting as my Aide-de-camp, is a very promising young officer, who performs his staff duties most intelligently both in the field and in quarters.

"11. The Garrison Adjutant, Lieut. Chichester, 2-21st Foot, has had very hard work, and very well it has been performed. He is quite fitted for promotion.

"12. I can speak most highly of the efficient way and tact with which Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Heygate acted as Camp Quartermaster in connection with the civilians, while at the same time performing Commissariat duty. This officer is well fitted for higher rank.

"13. He was ably seconded by the Rev. G. Weavind, Wesleyan minister, as a most energetic and painstaking sanitary inspector. This gentleman, by his acquaintance with the Dutch language, and tact, rendered frequent assistance as an envoy with a flag of truce to the enemy.

"14. To Captain (Major?) Campbell, 94th Foot, great credit is due, in his capacity of Provost-Marshal, for the successful arrangements made for the repression of disorder and crime amongst such a mixed population as that of Pretoria, and for the safety of property left in the town. Martial law has been carried on without severity, with great discretion, and with the assistance of the local Landdrost acting in his ordinary magisterial capacity.

"15. Lieut. Lys, Pretoria Carbineers, referred to by Lieut.-Colonel Gildea as his orderly officer, has also come under my notice when acting in the same capacity to myself, during the time Lieut.-Colonel Gildea was disabled, and I can bear testimony to his usefulness, and the intelligent manner in which he carried out orders. As interpreter, in communicating with the enemy, he was also of much assistance.

"16. From among the civilians, I would, in addition to the Rev. G. Weavind, whom I have already named, especially single out the Hon. H. Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs, for his advice concerning

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and supervision of the natives, and (together with Mr Melvill, Surveyor-General) management of the Intelligence Branch; the Hon. J. Joubert, for exercising a general supervision over the arrangements made for the care of the live stock; Mr J. Preller, Mayor of Pretoria, and Justice Kotze, for their energetic and satisfactory performance of the duties assigned to them as ward-masters over the civilians.

"17. The Garrison Sergeant-Major, Sergeant-Major Armstrong, 2-21st Foot, showed great zeal, energy, and intelligence in the discharge of his duties.

"18. The division of guns N/5 R.A., under Lieut. E. C. Hare, has rendered effective service; as also have the two 7-pr. guns worked by the band of the 2/21st Foot, and the Krupp and Whitworth guns under the Transvaal Artillery. A gun went out daily for the protection of the cattle, and the woodcutting, mowing, or mealie-gathering parties.

"19. The 2d Company Royal Engineers, under the able direction of its officers — Lieutenants Littledale and Commeline — performed excellent service, in erecting defences, running up accommodation for the large influx of civil population, as well as taking their share in defending the position and making sorties.

"20. The excellent discipline and conduct shown by the 2/21st Foot, commanded by Captain Burr (in the absence of Lieut.-Colonel Gildea from wounds or other causes), is worthy of praise. The garrison duty fell heavy on this regiment, but was cheerfully performed, desertion and insubordination ceasing.

"21. The Pretoria Carbineers and Nourse's Horse have worked admirably. On them mainly has fallen the scouting and vedette duty, and they have proportionately suffered from the enemy's fire. These corps, together with the mounted infantry, contributed largely to the widening of the area of grazing and mowing ground, and the prevention of cattle raids on the enemy's part.

"22. The Pretoria Rifles, under Major Le Mesurier, R.E., quickly became an excellent body of 400 men, who rendered good service in the defence of the Convent and Jail Laager, and in taking a share in other siege work.

"23. The natives, too, merit a word of praise, for many were the messages and despatches which passed to and fro through the enemy's line, the bearers thus risking their lives in the event of detection.

"24. As regards those in command of the forts at the out-stations, I desire to mention the name of Captain Anchinleck, 2/21st Foot, twice wounded at different times while gallantly attacking the enemy or defending the fort at Rustenburg. When he was incapacitated from his wounds, 2d Lieut. H. Despard, 2/21st Foot, took up the command with energy and success.

"25. Captain E. S. Brook, 94th Foot, has successfully held the fort at Marabastadt, and 2d Lieut. W. Long, 94th Foot, that at Lydenburg

against repeated attacks. The latter officer is said, from a Boer source, to have been wounded.

"26. From Br.-Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe, 2/21st Foot, and Major Thornhill, R.A., at Potchefstroom, I have not been able to hear since the first day of hostilities; but as the fort capitulated on the 21st March, and the garrison have withdrawn to the Free State, no doubt the Major-General will have had reports, and be in a better position to judge as to the merits of these officers.

"27. I enclose reports made to me by the Officer commanding the garrison of Pretoria, the District Officer Royal Engineers, the Senior Commissariat Officer, the Senior Ordnance Officer, and the Senior Medical Officer."

Lieut.-Colonel Gildea was subsequently made a Queen's Aide-de-camp, with the rank of Colonel; Major Le Mesurier received the brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel; Lance-Corporal Henry Hampton, R.S. Fusiliers, was awarded the distinguished-service medal for the gallant conduct referred to in p. 136.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SIEGE OF POTCHEFSTROOM.[1]

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The town.

POTCHEFSTROOM, the old capital, is situated in one of the most fertile districts of south-western Transvaal, on the Mooi river, a stream which here suffices to turn half-a-dozen water-mills. Built on the plain which slopes up from the river to the distant hills to the west, the little town covers a good deal of ground—about a mile and a half south to north, and half a mile east to west. The houses—many of a substantial description—are generally scattered, those of the well-to-do people standing in their own ground, about two hundred yards square, well studded with fruit-trees, and surrounded by hedges of cluster roses. The inhabitants, at this period, probably numbered between two and three thousand.

[1] A very graphic account of the sturdy defence of this fort—which will well repay reading—has been given by Colonel Winsloe in 'Macmillan's Magazine' for April 1883,—evidently grounded on the excellent description of the siege published by Lieutenant Rundle, R.A., in the 'Proceedings, Royal Artillery Institution,' No. 1, vol. xii., and reprinted in a separate form. The latter contains plates which tend still further to elucidate Lieutenant Rundle's clearly written narrative. We have in the main followed the accounts given by these officers.

The troops, consisting, as has been already mentioned, of two 9-pounder guns of N Battery, 5th Brigade, Royal Artillery; two companies of the Royal Scots Fusiliers; a detachment of the mounted troop of that corps; and a few men of the Commissariat and Army Hospital Corps — altogether, 10 officers and 203 men, at the commencement of hostilities,—had arrived at Potchefstroom, under Major Thornhill, R.A.,[1] about the third week in November. Major Thornhill, however, being also in command of the Royal Artillery in South Africa, and required at headquarters—and as the Administrator declined to withdraw the troops from Potchefstroom — Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe, of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, who had recently joined at Pretoria from England, was despatched to relieve him.

As there appeared no certainty of the speedy withdrawal of what was, at first, intended only as a flying column, Major Thornhill received instructions, a few days after reaching Potchefstroom, to select a position outside the town and construct a redoubt suitable for his force, and, in case the water-supply was liable to be cut off, to dig a well inside; but the works being still incomplete at the time of Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe's arrival, on the afternoon of the 12th December, the following three days were em-

[1] Mrs Thornhill remained at Pretoria—it being at that time intended that the removal of the troops to Potchefstroom should be merely temporary—and subsequently, with other officers' wives, went through all the discomforts of camp-life during the investment,—in her case the more felt from anxiety for the safety of her absent husband, the fort being known to be hard pressed by the enemy.

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ployed, with little intermission, in their improvement. The camp was pitched round the intrenchment on rising ground to the west of and overlooking the town; and the horses, mules, and oxen—76, 121, and 147 respectively, or 344 animals in all—were placed at some distance. But although the fort, in a measure, slightly commanded the town, so thick were the trees and foliage about the streets and in the enclosed gardens, that the houses were more or less hidden.

Special Commissioner's arrival.

Major M. J. Clarke, C.M.G., had arrived in the beginning of December—sent by the Administrator as his Special Commissioner. An attempt was made by

Failure to raise volunteers.

a few of the leading inhabitants to raise volunteers, to assist the military in the defence of the town in the event of its being attacked, but with little or no success, many of the townspeople fearing to lose their Boer customers, and others having no sympathy with the British. The only available men Major Clarke had to fall back upon, besides the military, were a few volunteers, with Captain Raaf and his score of special constables—enrolled the previous month for the purpose of arresting Mr Bezuidenhout and others.

Indications of rebellion disregarded.

Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe says, in his narrative of the siege, that he gave little credence to the opinion expressed by civilians that fighting was at hand; and remarks that the thoughts of himself and his officers were a good deal directed as to how they should amuse themselves and their fair friends. And yet at this time, short of actual conflict, the indications

of the coming storm could scarcely have been stronger than around Potchefstroom. The authorities there had been openly defied, and the arrest of the men concerned in such acts forcibly resisted by large armed bodies; and, following on this, a mass meeting of armed Boers had assembled at Paarde Kraal, close to the road traversed by Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe on his way to reach his destination. It can only be supposed that that officer had fallen into the prevailing belief, so commonly entertained by Englishmen, that the Boers were not sufficiently in earnest to proceed to blows, their "bark, in fact, being worse than their bite."

Major Thornhill, as shown by his reports made previous to Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe's arrival, entertained better founded and more serious apprehensions. As early as the 20th November he wrote: "Certainly it seems the general opinion now that if the arrest [of Bezuidenhout] is persevered in, the whole country will take up the cause;"[1] and Lieutenant Rundle, in his description of the defence, tells us: "Early in the month of December it became apparent that the aspect of affairs was much more serious than had at first been imagined. The Colonial Secretary came down, but failed to arrange matters with the malcontent Boers, who had collected in large numbers at Loverskania." About the 12th of December it was known that the Boers had announced their intention of retaking their old capital, and hoisting their

[1] See correspondence relating to Potchefstroom, Blue-book (c.—2866), pp. 149-157.

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flag on the 16th December, this day being auspicious to them as the anniversary of their victory over the Zulu King Dingaan, and commonly known as "Dingaan's Day." On the night of the 14th December Major Clarke was informed that Mr Bezuidenhout — the same person whose resistance to inequitable taxation has been alluded to as bringing on active rebellion — had been in the town, and warned several families to leave for the border, as there would be fighting. The next morning he learnt that, at the mass meeting at Paarde Kraal, the South African Republic had been proclaimed, a Triumvirate appointed, and the old Volksraad reassembled.

About noon on the 15th, two scouts came in to report to Major Clarke that a large body of Boers, fully armed, were approaching the town. Major Thornhill was at the time proceeding to take his seat in the post-cart to rejoin headquarters at Pretoria, when he was sent back by Major Clarke at full gallop to warn the camp. Major Clarke appears to have followed, and caused the troops to be confined within their lines. The tents were quickly struck, horses placed in the ditch, the guns—in pits two feet deep, at the north-east corner of the fort facing the cemetery—prepared for action, and the parapets manned. It having been arranged — unwisely, as events showed — between Major Clarke and Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe that the Court-house and jail should be held, garrisons were sent to these buildings, —Captain Falls, with twenty-four men, to assist Captain Raaf and seven or eight civilians in the

defence of the former; and Lieutenant Dalrymple-Hay, with Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Dunne and twenty-two men to the latter.

Boer force enters Potchefstroom.

The Boer advance-guard soon after rode into the market-square—the main body remaining on the outskirts to the north of the town—and the leader proceeded to occupy Borrius's printing-office, for the purpose of getting the Boer proclamation printed. Major Clarke failing in obtaining an interview with the Boer commander, then protested in writing against the printing of any seditious documents. In the evening Boer sentries were posted at the corners of the principal streets, and the townspeople were challenged. The manager of the Standard Bank, while walking towards the fort, was arrested and forcibly detained all night.

Refugees from the town.

It seems to have been expected that, having got their proclamation printed, the Boers would leave the town in the morning. Perhaps under this impression, and fearing rough treatment at the hands of the armed men then patrolling the town, several civilian families sought refuge and were received into the fort,—among others those of the Chevalier Forssman, member of the Legislative Assembly and Consul-General for Portugal, a very large landowner—and his son-in-law, Dr Sketchley, the district surgeon.

Military posts held.

The Boers now had possession of the whole of the town, excepting the Court-house and jail—military posts which only proved a source of weakness and loss to our arms. These buildings were 400

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yards apart, hidden from view the one from the other, through the ground between being intersected by houses, garden-walls, and trees. The Court-house, on one side of the market-square, was wholly unsuited for defence, surrounded as it was by houses, out-buildings, and shelter of various sorts, enabling an enemy to approach close up, while its roof was thatched. The jail—a square building, whose walls were 20 feet high, but with the upper parts built of sun-dried bricks, through which bullets could easily penetrate — stood midway between the Court-house and fort, in comparatively open ground, the veld sloping up about 25 feet towards the fort, 360 yards off, crossed by a water-furrow, 40 yards from the jail, which supplied the western side of the town.

The first shot.

At about 9 A.M. on the 16th December, while the officers were breakfasting in groups, in company with their guests, outside the fort, a patrol of eight or ten armed Boers, issuing from the north end of the town, rode slowly past, between the fort and jail, at a distance of 150 yards, turning off into the town as soon as they had passed the jail. This being regarded as too inquisitive, a party of seventeen men of the mounted troop, under Lieutenant Lindsell, was sent to inquire their business, and acquaint them that no armed body could be permitted to approach so close to the fort. The Boers, however, had already turned into the town before the mounted infantry reached them, and on the latter attempting to follow, a dismounted Boer picket at the corner of the street

fired some shots from behind a wall. Lieutenant Lindsell, dismounting some of his men, caused the fire to be returned, which resulted in one of the Boer patrol being wounded. An ambuscade being feared, the "retire" was sounded from the fort, and the party brought back.[1] All then retired behind the intrenchment. Sacks of mealies were placed round the guns and ditch, in which were the horses; and the part where the women were was similarly protected. The Boers shortly after entered the market-square in force, and the attack became general.

Surrender of the Court-house.

As the Boers, now rushing into the market-square, pressed forward on the Court-house, Major Clarke, who had withdrawn inside, directed some warning shots to be fired over their heads. This had the effect of causing them to seek cover, from whence they opened a heavy fire. Captain

[1] In their "Second Proclamation"—dated 23d December, Blue-book (c.—2838), March 1881, par. 20—the Triumvirate attempt to show that the first shot in the war was fired by the British, and that their doing so was brought about by the issue, previously, of a Government notice, forbidding armed bodies to approach within a mile of any town. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe's account disposes of the charge of our having commenced hostilities; and Colonel Bellairs's report of the 17th December—given in Appendix C—proves that the notice in question was not received, or any instructions with regard to it issued to the troops, until the 16th—after hostilities had already broken out at Potchefstroom, though that they had commenced was not known at Pretoria for some days after. The fact is, that the military were specially careful everywhere not to come into unnecessary collision with the malcontent Boers. Sir George Colley, when at Pretoria the previous August, had given expression to his feeling of the danger which might ensue from an incautious shot fired by the troops, by remarking that "the first shot fired on our side would raise the whole country."

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Falls was shot dead at the outset; two soldiers were wounded, and, later, a volunteer was killed and another wounded. Communication with the fort was kept up until the morning of the 18th, though at one time difficulty was experienced from its leading to too great exposure. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe, on learning this, signalled to have a hole made in the roof for the flags to be worked through, which was accordingly done; and on the 17th, it appearing that the garrison was hard pressed, he suggested to Major Clarke the desirability of retiring after dark on the jail — a distance of 400 yards—he himself thinking, apparently, of evacuating the fort for that position at the same time, in consequence of increasing difficulty in obtaining water. Major Clarke, however, pointed out that this course would necessitate his abandoning his wounded, and was therefore directed to remain until next day.[1] Under cover of night the enemy succeeded in taking up a position in a garden close to the back windows of the building, and, in the morning, opened fire from three sides, finally getting up to within twelve feet of the loopholes, and throwing fire-balls on the thatched roof. The garrison, towards the end, was unable to return the fire. Then fearing that, if the roof got thoroughly ignited, not a man would escape, Major Clarke hoisted a white flag in place of the Union-jack, and surrendered unconditionally about 10 A.M. The British force was thus diminished by about thirty-five men, two-thirds of whom were regulars.

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2866), No. 78.

Attack on the fort.

The attack on the fort commenced by the enemy opening fire from the walls and gardens of the town, and then throwing forward flanking attacks—the left of which was, however, never developed. Their right came on boldly into the open, some riding forward until they got cover from the cemetery wall—360 yards to the north-east. From this position they were dislodged by three or four shells; and, similarly, the advance of the main body was checked and driven to the north end of the town. Besides the garrison of the Court-house—which was supported by artillery-fire on portions of the town occupied by the enemy—that of the jail was also hotly engaged. In twenty minutes the combined artillery and rifle fire had caused the enemy to retire from all sides, with the loss, it was believed, of many men and horses, their leader—Assistant Commandant-General Cronjé—having had two horses killed under him.

Some desultory firing went on during the 17th and morning of the 18th, until a white flag appeared hoisted at the Court-house. The cause for the latter seems to have been little anticipated at the fort; but soon after, one of the leading Boers of the place—Mr Erasmus—appeared, under a flag of truce, bringing a letter to the commanding officer, which stated that Major Clarke, finding his position untenable, had surrendered, but that the lives of the garrison would be spared and good treatment given to the prisoners. It was hoped that the remaining posts would now also be given up. A truce was proclaimed until 4 P.M. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe replied to the effect

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that the surrender made by Major Clarke did not affect the other positions held by her Majesty's troops.

Truce.

Advantage was taken, on both sides, of the interval of truce, to strengthen their respective positions. The gun-pits at the north-east corner of the fort were deepened and traverses erected.

Boer treachery.

The white flags on either side were still flying, when, a few minutes before four o'clock—the hour named for the expiration of the truce—and while many soldiers were exposed, the Boers poured in a volley, luckily only wounding one man, at the jail, but severely in two places. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe declares that there was no excuse for this act of treachery. That officer also relates that—"A few Boers carried explosive bullets, about the using of which frequent protest was made without effect. One of our men had the flesh blown from his arm by one of these shells, and their explosion was frequently heard at night."

The enemy's line of fire was now so extended that it was difficult to do anything to reduce it, though it was observed that, after one or two shells being effectively directed to a particular spot, the fire from that point would perceptibly slacken. The jail especially became hotly engaged with large numbers occupying the houses behind it.

The jail abandoned.

The Court-house no longer forming part of the position, there was no longer the same necessity for holding the jail, which, besides, was now discovered

to be untenable. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe therefore signalled, on the afternoon of the 18th, that the garrison should, on a given signal, displayed after dark, retire on the fort. Lieutenant Dalrymple-Hay effected the withdrawal noiselessly, under cover of a misty night, in skirmishing order, without attracting the attention of the enemy. One man had been killed and two wounded. The latter were carried in on stretchers made with rifles. The post could not have held out much longer, as, besides the upper walls—built of only sun-dried bricks—being easily perforated by bullets, the Boers fired through the lower loopholes at short range, with such accuracy that occasionally they could not be manned. The supplies of provisions kept in the jail had to be abandoned.

Want of water.

The want of water became at the outset a serious cause for anxiety. Some of the horses had been watered the first evening at the water-furrow towards the town, but only with losses and one man wounded. Then horses and mules, one-third at a time, were sent, with covering parties to protect their flanks and rear, to a spot above stream, called "The Willows," N.N.W. of the fort. The water-carts also made two trips during the night, the reserve barrels being so filled and a moderate supply of water secured, calculated to last the garrison three days, at three pints a-head each day. This allowance was found very inadequate by the soldiers, of whom, at this time, such continued exertion and hard labour,

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under a hot sun, was required. But even this source of supply was cut off by the enemy moving in its direction.

Horses and mules lost.

On the 19th, the horses and mules had been without water for forty-eight hours, and the men's supply was nearly exhausted; but that night, a storm coming on, sufficient water was caught, by means of tarpaulins, waterproof sheets, &c., for men and animals until the 21st. Then the battery-horses—many of them very fine ones—and the transport-mules were turned loose, and galloping off to the water, were quickly driven away by the Boers. Only one favourite horse, belonging to one of the officers, was retained. Although twice wounded, it survived the siege. On the afternoon of the 21st, more heavy rain falling, enough water was again caught to last further three days.

Meanwhile the well inside the fort had been sunk to a depth of over thirty feet, sixteen of which was through rock, and yet only a nine-gallon cask of muddy water was obtainable each day. A second one was therefore commenced on the left front of the fort, and eventually a good and plentiful supply was found at fifteen feet depth.

The oxen lost.

The oxen had strayed away and fallen into the hands of the Boers on the 17th, though many of them had already been shot by them. Their carcasses lying about caused most noxious odours, until pulled away by men who volunteered for this risky work, when the vultures ventured to approach and performed their usual useful scavengering.

Refugees in the fort.

The presence of women and children in the small fort—only thirty yards square—proved a very serious embarrassment, it never having been intended as a place for such refugees. On the night of the 16th, after the first day's engagement, five additional men and twenty-one women and children came out of the town and asked for protection. They were taken in, the number, with those previously received, being thus increased to forty-eight. Most, however—all but about thirteen men and women—soon found that it would have been better for them to have remained in the town and risked the ill-treatment they feared at the hands of hostile Boers. These, therefore, availed themselves of the permission given by the Boer general, and left the fort on the 24th December. One child had been killed and another wounded on that day. Later, towards the close of the siege, when the Boers were aware that provisions were running short, although permission was asked for the remaining ladies to leave, it was refused.

Natives in the fort.

Besides these civilians, there were, attached to the Commissariat and Transport Department, one European civil conductor and sixty native drivers and leaders; but thirty-nine of the latter left during the siege. On the 23d January, about thirty, of their own accord, attempted to escape through the Boer lines. While some were successful, others were shot, and a few came back unable to get away.

The strength of the enemy at the commencement

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The enemy's strength.

was about 800 men, increased by the 1st January to about 1400; but reduced afterwards, when reinforcements left for Laing's Nek, though never falling below 400—all well armed, generally with Westley-Richards rifles, though some carried double express rifles.

The fort improved.

In the early part of the siege, while the parapet of the fort was still low, inconvenience was caused by the enemy firing from the trees and house-tops, and the guns were employed in clearing them with shrapnel. The fort soon, from having been little more than a shelter-trench, became a really strong earthwork, with parapet eight to ten feet high, and the ditch outside proportionately deep. Only so could the scorching fire it had to contend against for so long a period—ninety-five days—have been withstood. A party was told off nightly for work, some repairs being always necessary, through damage caused by the enemy's fire—an old ship-gun having been brought to bear—sand-bags becoming rotten, and heavy rains. Many thousands of sand-bags were made, chiefly by the wounded and convalescents, from tents or any convertible material at hand.

Rifle-pits for dark nights were constructed outside, with zigzag communication from the fort.

The natives were utilised for baling the stagnant water out of the ditch, the stench from which became very foul, drainage from two sides having been found impracticable.

The burial of the dead had to be conducted outside the fort at night, the parties employed being often

fired at. Sanitary parties employed outside were similarly endangered.

New-Year's Day attack.

The morning of the new year was ushered in by a general attack on the fort. A 3-pounder smooth-bore ship-gun, firing a leaden projectile weighing about 5 lb., was brought into action on the enemy's left, supported by rifle-fire from the whole line, the cemetery being also occupied. The fire—from loopholed walls, house-tops, and trees — was very severe, and could only be checked in detail by the guns, the rest of the troops for an hour and a half remaining under cover, rifle in hand, in readiness to repel any attempted assault. The enemy's gun fired twenty rounds, several penetrating the parapet; but it was eventually silenced by artillery-fire from the fort. About eight o'clock the fire slackened, and again resumed its normal desultory character. The anticipated assault was not attempted; and yet it was considered that a determined rush on the fort, with such numbers as were then available, would not have been a very difficult task, especially as the long grass around would have enabled men to creep up very close unseen. Repeated efforts were made to burn the grass, but it was always found too green.

Town magazine occupied.

On the afternoon of the 3d January, the enemy's gun having been traversed behind a house, close to the jail, opened fire at a distance of 500 yards, on a small building of strong stone walls with an iron door, two hundred yards north-west of the fort, used as the town magazine, and holding some powder and ammu-

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nition. Twenty-one rounds were fired, directed solely against the magazine, which was hit and penetrated four times. The guns from the fort succeeded in dismounting the gun, and destroying the house and parapet behind which it was placed. The powder and ammunition not required were removed and destroyed; and, in order to counteract the occupation of the cemetery by the enemy, the magazine was held as an outpost from this date.

Night sortie.

The enemy now began to approach by sap in steady earnest, and notwithstanding being harassed by artillery and rifle fire, made continued progress. The near wall of the cemetery—an enclosure of about 300 yards square—had been held at night, with a covering party as well lying beyond. It having been noticed that the enemy had been busy at work in this direction for several nights, it was determined to send a party to find out what was going on. One very dark night, the 7th January, an officer, Lieutenant Lindsell, and six men, taken from many who volunteered for the hazardous duty, went out for the purpose by a circuitous route, all in the fort remaining in readiness to cover their retirement. Proceeding slowly and stealthily along, they managed to creep up unseen to within five yards, and fire three volleys into the enemy working at a trench, before the latter recovered from the confusion into which they were thrown, or were able to find their rifles in the darkness. Then a hot fire ensued, but the brave little band regained the fort unhurt. As a safeguard,

after this experience, the Boers advanced by double sap, the inner trench, unseen from the fort, thus serving to protect the outer, in case of another similar sortie.

Day sortie.

By the 21st January the enemy had sapped to within 300 yards of the right and left faces of the fort. The attack was now further developed by the construction of detached trenches to the right and left rear. These works obliged further traversing. On the 22d, a third detached sap opened by the enemy, about 220 yards from and commanding the rear of the fort, threatening to become very inconvenient, Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe determined to send a party to storm it. Volunteers being called for, Lieutenant Dalrymple-Hay, one sergeant, and ten men were selected. The attack was carried out in broad daylight on the 22d, and the trench taken in two rushes. Covered by artillery and rifle fire, the party advanced across the open veld in the most spirited manner, lying down midway to recover their breath. Then rising and charging forward, the trench was taken, with four prisoners, two of whom were wounded. The rest of its occupants, fourteen, ran; but eleven are said to have been seen to fall when making their way through the long grass to the south end of the town. Three of Lieutenant Dalrymple-Hay's gallant fellows fell immediately on quitting the fort, one of whom died the following day.[1]

[1] Drivers Gibson and Paed, and Trumpeter Martin, seeing two of the party fall before reaching the sap, ran out from the fort and brought

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A truce followed, to allow of the removal of the Boer wounded, and the exchange of the four prisoners taken for four of the Fusiliers captured at the Court-house on the 18th December. Stretchers were lent, which were returned the next morning, with fruit for our wounded, and some carbolic acid asked for by the surgeon.

Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe well remarks with respect to this latter pleasing episode: "We thanked the Boer commander for his thought of our wounded, and so this affair ended. Civilities like these take the sting off warfare, and I must say for the Boers that they were never behind in such things. They are a fine, manly, sturdy race, such as I should like to live among. Who can blame them for fighting for their independence? We, at least, did not do so."

News of reinforcements from England.

Through the exchanged prisoners, the garrison learnt that reinforcements were on their way from England and India, and the spirits of all were cheered by the prospect of relief soon coming to their assistance.

Union-jack made.

No British flag had been seen at Potchefstroom since the surrender of the Court-house. The artillery now set to work to manufacture a substitute for the one lost. With the aid of a blue serge coat, contributed by an infantry officer, and the red and white linings from the cloaks of a subaltern and sergeant of artillery, a Union-jack was completed, and on the

them in. All three were rewarded with the medal for gallant conduct in the field.

23d January, amidst the cheers of the troops, hoisted over the parapet of the fort. For two months it continued to fly, and had many bullet-holes to show. N Battery of the 5th Brigade—already so distinguished in previous South African wars—retained possession of and brought to England this interesting relic. The Queen paid the battery the high compliment of causing it to be halted for her Majesty's personal inspection on the 3d July 1882—when on the march, passing near Windsor Castle—and then had this flag shown to her.

Outer communication.

Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe managed to get his report of the occurrences of the 16th December past the Boer lines the same day[1]— Colonel Bellairs receiving

[1] From Major and Brevet Lieut.-Colonel R. W. C. Winsloe, Royal Scots Fusiliers, commanding troops, Potchefstroom, to the Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, Pretoria—

"THE CAMP, POTCHEFSTROOM,
16*th December* 1880.

"I have the honour to report that I have been menaced by the Boers since yesterday at 12 noon. This morning a party of Boers threatened the fort about 9 A.M., and fired on the mounted infantry. It was rumoured that a proclamation was to be read on the market-square at 9 A.M. to-day announcing a Republic. Major Clarke, R.A., is in Landdrost's office with Captain Falls and about 20 volunteers under Captain Raaf. Lieut. Hay and D.-A. C.-Gl. Dunne are at jail. Major Thornhill is with me here. At about 9 A.M. a party of the mounted infantry was fired upon, and they returned the fire. Almost simultaneously we heard firing from the Landdrost's office, which we occupy. The camp was shortly afterwards vigorously attacked on three sides, and this has continued more or less all day. The enemy have retreated repulsed on all sides, but stray shots have been fired all day into camp from the environs of the town, and firing has been going on continuously from the market-square and jail. It is impossible to hold more than the jail, Landdrost's office, and the camp with the present force, owing to this being a very straggling town. Not a volunteer is forthcoming, and

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it at Pretoria on the 21st; but after that date, though many attempts were made to communicate, none of the messages sent out by natives reached their destination, nor was it known what became of their bearers. A European succeeded in getting as far as the Vaal, a dozen miles off; but, not being able to cross, returned in a half-starved condition. The only successful venture was made by two brothers—Messrs J. and W. Nelson—who, starting on the night of the 19th February, during a thunderstorm, walked to the Vaal, passing three of the enemy's pickets, and swam the river near De Wet's Drift. Passing through the Orange Free State, by way of Kronstadt and Harrismith, they eventually—on the 8th March—after much hardship, managed to reach Sir Evelyn Wood's headquarters at Newcastle.

The only communication which reached Lieut.-

nearly the whole town are to all appearance on the side of the enemy. The enemy occupy the town, with exception of that portion covered by our fire. Communication with the Landdrost's office is very difficult, the whole distance each side being under fire of houses occupied by the enemy. Chevalier Forssman and family, and many ladies and children, have taken refuge in my camp. Probability of water-supply being cut off. Horses can only be watered and water obtained for our use under the enemy's fire. I am sinking two wells (struck water in one of them), and so I don't anticipate much difficulty on that. I consider our position a very grave one, chiefly from the fact that the greater part of the population is undoubtedly hostile to us. Unless affairs take a better turn shortly, I may be forced to take the field, as I am using my ammunition very fast. I am embarrassed by the presence of ladies and children. The soldiers under my command are behaving admirably. Major Clarke has asked me to open communication with him, but I am unable yet to do so. Casualties as known to me up to the present are entered below."

Colonel Winsloe, from outside the Boer lines, was a message sent by Colonel Bellairs on the 22d December. This appears to have been intercepted by the Boers, but eventually sent into the fort under a flag of truce on the 4th February. Its purport was, an acknowledgment of the receipt of Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe's report of the 16th December, an allusion to the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster, with instructions that the fort should hold out to the last, and finally destroy arms and guns.[1] The object of the Boer general in now forwarding this letter was to declare that, should the arms and guns not be handed over intact, in case of surrender, the lives of the garrison would not be guaranteed. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe replied that he had no intention of surrendering.

Rigorous measures were adopted by Assistant-General Cronjé against all civilians suspected of aiding the British cause. Major Clarke, Mr Goetz—the Landdrost—and others were kept close prisoners. Commandant Raaf was kept handcuffed. Capital sentences, awarded by Boer courts-martial, were carried out during the siege against several of the inhabitants—Messrs Van der Linden and C. Woite, and some natives—accused of being spies, and having given information respecting the Paarde Kraal meeting to the Government. Others who had sided with us, and had occupied the Criterion Hotel and Schirkerling's house adjoining the Court-house, firing on the Boers when the attack commenced, were sentenced to various terms of hard labour. For "mis-

[1] See *ante*, note, p. 169.

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deeds against the Transvaal Republic," many others were punished with hard-labour sentences or heavy fines, and natives flogged or shot. Both white and black men undergoing hard labour thus awarded were forced to work in the advanced trenches, where many were killed or wounded.

Ruse of the enemy.

On the 16th January the Boers attempted to obtain possession of the fort by a ruse. A letter—said to have been prepared at their headquarters at Heidelberg — expressed in telegraphic cipher or Morse's alphabet, and purporting to emanate from Colonel Bellairs, was sent to the fort, informing Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe that a column was approaching to his relief, and would arrive before Potchefstroom the following morning, when, on a given signal, he should sally out to join it, and together defeat the Boer force. The wording of the letter was, however, clumsily done, the ruse was seen through, and no attention paid to it. No signal was observed; but next morning heavy rifle and cannon firing, heard in a wood a mile away, showed that the Boers were carrying out further their attempt at deception. They were afterwards seen returning to the town, some dressed in red coats, discomfited by the failure of their design, coupled with the drenching they got from a tremendous downpour of rain which was going on at the time. A shell was sent in their direction, which had the effect of quickening their movements.

News of Sir George Colley's

Towards the end of January, anxious looks began to be cast day and night towards the hill-tops around,

in the hope that signals, giving notice of an advancing column, might be discovered; but any idea of such immediate relief was dispelled on the 4th February, when a flag of truce brought a copy of the 'Staats Courant'—Boer Government Gazette—for the 2d February, giving an account of Sir George Colley's first reverse at Laing's Nek. first reverse.

The enemy's gun reopened fire on the 29th January, 500 yards from the front of the fort. Although shells were accurately exploded near its apparent spot, it could not be silenced. The cause for this was only discovered after the siege. The gun was loaded behind a house, the interior of which had been filled up with sacks of earth, thus giving protection from shell; and it was run round the corner only when required to fire. Thick bushes on either side of the house also intercepted any view of the enemy's movements. From this day until the 10th March, the gun was brought into action against the fort almost daily, though doing but little damage. Once, indeed, a shot entered an embrasure while the gun was being worked, killing one man and severely wounding another. Enemy's gun re-opens.

A mutual good understanding arose between the two contending parties in their employment of Sundays, which is thus felicitously related by Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe:— Sunday amenities.

"After the first few Sundays, at least during the day-time, little shooting went on, and by mutual

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consent we left each other alone. I always read the Church of England service myself in our little mess, while captains of companies read morning prayers to their men along the parapet. Our commissariat officer, who had been one of the brave defenders of Rorke's Drift, read the Roman Catholic service to the men of that Church. That we had a few sympathisers in the town was evident; for on Sunday afternoons we often saw a whole family come out from behind a wall and wave their handkerchiefs to us; and this we took to be a friendly greeting. We could hear the singing in the Dutch churches in the town on Sundays; and in the trenches the Boers used to collect on Sunday nights and sing psalms for an hour or so, sure of being undisturbed, as they always were."

Further advance of the enemy.

Beyond keeping up a continued fire by day and night, and investing the fort sufficiently closely to prevent communication, the enemy, up to the 15th February, had not further developed their attack; but on that night and afterwards increased energy was shown. Bags of wool were brought up, and their sap proceeded with, at a rate of from 20 to 30 yards each night, until, on the 7th March, the desired point was reached, 100 yards from the magazine, and enfilading our sap — unfortunately a straight one—from the fort to it. Then a work was commenced, about 12 feet high and 6 or 7 feet thick at the top, constructed with bags of earth, looking over the magazine and into the fort, against which the artillery could effect nothing. This was intended for

the Boer gun, as also another which was said to be at hand; and the work was ready and the embrasures made for the purpose, when the capitulation took place a fortnight later.

After the 15th February, too, the enemy formed a closer cordon of pickets, completely surrounding the fort. Lieutenants Rundle and Lean, and Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Dunne, with small parties, endeavoured, on successive nights, to intercept their pickets, but failed: on the last occasion the enemy attempted to cut the party off, but it succeeded in re-entering the fort without casualty.

During the night of the 9th March, the enemy constructed a line of trench, with a small work in the centre for their gun, 600 yards from the rear of the fort, and taking its front face in reverse. Fire was opened at daybreak, and continued until dark; but although the gun fired 83 rounds at the fort, generally with effect, little damage resulted.

On the 11th, fire was again resumed, the gun contributing 52 rounds during the day. One ball pitched into a tent with wounded men, and so injured two that one died a few days afterwards, and the other had to have an arm amputated.

As a means of ensuring accuracy of rifle-fire, especially by night, the enemy employed logs, two feet long, cut from trees, with a place cut as a rest for the rifle-barrel, narrow at one end and gradually widening to eight inches at the other. The rifle was then adjusted so as to sweep the parapet of the fort, the log at the same time serving as excellent shelter.

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Lady refugees.

Six ladies had unfortunately remained in the fort after the return of the remainder of the women and children to the town on the 24th December. Their condition during the long siege could not be otherwise than most deplorable. They had arrived with only what they stood in, and had to endure dangers, hardships, and sufferings, such as very rarely nowadays fall to any women. Nevertheless their behaviour, under these extraordinary circumstances, was courageous and uncomplaining to the end. Although the more or less underground existence they led enabled them to escape, almost wholly, being injured by the enemy's fire—only one being slightly wounded when attempting to take a little exercise—yet one of their number, Mrs Sketchley, succumbed to an attack of enteric fever.

Colonel Winsloe mentions a pathetic incident. "Five tents were not enough for the sick, and it was necessary to put up infectious cases elsewhere. To accomplish this we had to dig holes in the outside wall of the ditch, and there put the worst cases. A brother of one of the ladies died of typhoid fever, and it was sad to see the sister sitting all night in this hole watching her dying brother. We did all we could for them, but that was little enough." Mr and Mrs Forssman thus lost a son and a daughter during the siege; while two more of their daughters were stricken with the same fever at the time of the capitulation.

Food supplies.

The occupation and subsequent abandonment of

the Court-house and jail as military posts had caused loss of provisions. Then another portion—tins of meat and biscuit, and bags of mealies, &c.—having been utilised, on the emergency of the moment, for purposes of defence—raising the parapet and making traverses—soon became destroyed or damaged through the enemy's bullets and exposure to the weather. All the Commissariat cattle were lost at the outset; but a temporary supply of fresh meat was obtained about the middle of February by two successful sorties, and fortunate capture of nine cows approaching the fort on the one occasion, and a few sheep on the other. Beyond this, no food-supplies were passed into the fort throughout the siege.

The regular ration was reduced on the 19th December, and still further from time to time. On the 11th January, half a pound of mealies—Indian corn intended for the horses and mules—was substituted for the same quantity of failing biscuits; and on the 22d of the same month, this was made a daily issue. On the 15th March the only issue consisted of one pound of mealies and half a pound of Kafir corn—millet—with a quarter of a pound preserved meat on alternate days. Tea, coffee, sugar, salt, rice, biscuits, and all else had been consumed long before. The stock of fuel was finished by the 15th January, and it then became necessary to break up the waggons, of which there were seventeen: all were burnt but five, which served as inner traverses. The ambulance-waggons and ammunition-carts—two of each—and three water-carts, were kept.

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Lieutenant Rundle states that—"Provisioned with only one month's meat (preserved) and six weeks' bread-stuff, the garrison had held out for three months with the assistance of mealies, which were eventually the only food left, and which were now beginning to fail us, being half rotten from exposure and wet. For three months the men had been exposed to the effects of the weather, with only such cover as they could obtain from shelter made of waterproof sheets, &c. One day they were baked by the sun, the next they were soaked with the rain, which fell in torrents for about two months. Often the men had to sleep in water; and this, combined with want of food, had necessarily produced dysentery and enteric fever, from which officers and men suffered alike. Three cases of scurvy had broken out."

On the 20th March, all that remained were 1600 lb. whole mealies and 5006 lb. whole Kafir corn, all damaged, with a few pounds of preserved meat, &c., reserved for the sick.

A suspected Boer spy.

On the 8th March, after dark, a Boer came in, or allowed himself to be captured near the magazine. At first he could scarcely speak for fear; but presently, apparently to propitiate those at whose mercy he now was, he indicated that he was coiled over from head to foot with rolls of tobacco. He was quickly turned round and round until quite giddy, and the tobacco unrolled and distributed all round. The want of tobacco had been long felt among the soldiers. Some had contrived to make a smoking mixture of

tea-leaves and coffee-grounds, as long as these lasted, and then of mealie-leaves.

Being deemed a spy, the man was kept chained to the wheel of a waggon by night, though allowed greater freedom by day. When examined by one of the refugees, acting as interpreter, he disclosed some matters which were found to be correct — among others, of the intended general attack, which took place two days afterwards.

On the 17th March, Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe, feeling that matters were coming to a crisis, and that want of food would soon oblige capitulation, determened to make use of the supposed spy, and accordingly offered him a hundred pounds to go into the town and return with the latest intelligence. The man got there, the preconcerted signal being given the following morning from a house on the outskirts of the town, which had been previously pointed out. He returned to the fort during the next night; and as the report he made indicated that the garrison had no hope of relief, a consultation took place, when all were of opinion that there was but one line to take. There was little more to eat, and the sick were dying from want of proper nourishment.

Capitulation.

At sunrise on the 19th March, Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe sent out a flag of truce with a letter to the Boer commander, proposing a meeting. This was agreed to, and held at noon in a marquee pitched 150 yards from the fort. A written agreement, ready for signature, was handed to Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe,

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the terms being to the effect that, with exception of the officers, who were to be free and keep their arms, all the rest were to be prisoners of war, and everything in the fort surrendered. All conditions proposed by Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe were negatived. Nothing could be settled, so it was agreed to meet again at the same time the following day. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe appears to have heard of the armistice made by Sir Evelyn Wood on the 19th, and to have written to General Cronjé on the subject, who admitted the fact, and added that he intended to carry the armistice out according to his orders, which, however, he did not specify.

On the 20th another meeting took place, and, after much negotiation, an agreement was arrived at. The terms arranged were,—that the troops should march out with the honours of war and their flag flying; the civilians—11 Europeans and 29 natives—being allowed to accompany them into the Orange Free State, all agreeing not to serve again during the war; officers to retain their weapons, and both officers and men their private property; guns and rifles to be surrendered, but the ammunition for both to be handed over to the custody of the President of the Orange Free State, for return after the war. These conditions were signed the following day.

Good behaviour of the Boers.

Great kindness was shown by the Boers, and every assistance given in procuring provisions for the garrison, and medicine and comforts for the sick, the moment hostilities ceased. Gifts of every kind were showered upon them, no soldier going away empty-

handed. One Boer sent fifty ducks to the sick and wounded, of whom there were respectively eight and fifteen. Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe and the officers were entertained at dinner at the hotel by General Cronjé and his officers; and other invitations were pressed upon them.

On the morning of the 23d, the waggons having been packed the previous night, the troops evacuated the position, and marched out with the honours of war, their flag flying and their bugles sounding. At the water-furrow, they were received by the Boer force,—"a fine soldierly lot of men, in number about 400," remarks Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe; while Lieutenant Rundle declares that "every mark of respect was shown by the Boers to H.M. troops, and neither by sign nor word was any discourtesy shown them whilst marching through the town. In short, the courtesy shown by the Boers after the cessation of hostilities to those who a few days before had been their enemies, could not have been exceeded by any European nation."

Departure of the garrison.

Marching slowly through the Orange Free State, by way of Kronstadt and Harrismith, Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe and his party reached Ladysmith, in Natal, on the 2d May, when they once more got the shelter of tents, a luxury they had been without for nearly five months.

Our losses.

The casualties resulting to the troops had been one officer and twenty-one men killed or died of wounds, four men of disease, and five officers and forty-

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six men wounded. Of the foregoing, one man was wounded three times, and three men twice. Six natives were wounded in the fort.

Boer losses.

As regards the enemy's losses, Lieutenant Rundle speaks thus, and Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe similarly: "Of the Boer casualties during the siege it is impossible to form any accurate estimate. They themselves will only confess to one or two killed and twenty wounded. There can, however, be little doubt that their total in killed and wounded was little short of two hundred, as many as fifteen burials being known to have taken place at one time. The Boer leaders in Potchefstroom, as in other places, were careful to conceal their losses from their men; and, until they dispersed to their homes, the Boers themselves did not know their true loss."

District Order.

The resolute little garrison elicited the following well-deserved District Order from Colonel Bellairs:—

"PRETORIA, *8th April* 1881.

"The fort at Potchefstroom capitulated on the 21st March, but only when its garrison was reduced to extremity, and after as brave a defence as any in military annals—the troops marching out with the honours of war, and proceeding through the Orange Free State to Natal. The sterling qualities for which British soldiers have been renowned have been brilliantly shown in this instance during a long period of privation, and under very trying circumstances.

"Colonel Bellairs begs Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe and the officers and men under him to accept his thanks for the proud and determined way in which they performed their duty."

The capitulation made by Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe

Capitulation cancelled.

was subsequently cancelled, it having been agreed that the Boer Commandant at Potchefstroom had committed a breach of Schedule III. of the agreement entered into for an armistice on the 6th March, inasmuch as he did not communicate the conditions thereof to the British commander immediately on receipt—the 12th or 13th.[1]

The conditions of the armistice were certainly most curious. As regards Potchefstroom and the other British posts in the Transvaal, the eight days' armistice was not to commence until subsequent to the arrival of the convoys sent from Natal with eight days' provisions to each garrison. Though, therefore, the agreement was made at Laing's Nek on the 6th March, and led at once to a cessation of hostilities between Sir Evelyn Wood and General Joubert, it had no such effect elsewhere on the notification of the armistice being made. Had General Cronjé fully carried out the conditions, and notified them to Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe on the 12th, fighting would not have been thereby stopped. The only difference would have been that the garrison might possibly have endeavoured to hold out somewhat longer, in the hope that the convoy, with eight days' provisions —despatched on the 7th, but delayed by swollen rivers or other causes—might still reach them in time.[2]

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2950) of June 1881, Nos. 50 and 63.

[2] In recognition of their services, Lieut.-Colonel Winsloe was subsequently made a Queen's aide-de-camp, with the rank of Colonel, and Major Thornhill received the brevet rank of Lieut.-Colonel.

CHAPTER V.

THE SIEGE OF RUSTENBURG FORT.

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Town.

RUSTENBURG, a very small town, with the usual Dutch churches, Government offices, and school, hotel, sundry stores, and even a few buildings of two storeys—not often met with in the Transvaal—lies about seventy miles west of Pretoria, and the same distance north of Potchefstroom. The warmer climate and fertility of the district produces most sorts of tropical as well as many of the European kinds of fruit and plants. Its inhabitants, mostly of Dutch extraction, had shown a kindly disposition towards the military. A few months before hostilities, when the garrison was relieved, its commanding officer—Captain Willoughby of the 2d Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers—had presented to him an engrossed parchment address, signed by the principal people, highly complimentary to the officers and men, and showing how well they had ingratiated themselves with all classes, and the excellent feeling which had subsisted between all parties.

Fort and garrison.

The fort—an earthwork of about 25 yards square—was placed between 600 and 700 yards from the

town. In November 1880, in order to strengthen the field column, then sent from Pretoria to Potchefstroom, the garrison had been reduced by one company, and, at the time hostilities commenced, only consisted of a company of sixty-two men of the 2d Battalion 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers, with a few men of the Commissariat and Hospital Corps, under the command of Captain Auchinleck, the other officers present being Second Lieutenant Despard and Surgeon Ritchie.

Opening of hostilities.

When hostilities seemed imminent, the fort was further strengthened, sand-bags being placed on the parapets, and small mines laid. To give greater scope to the defence, some military huts were also thrown down. On the 24th December, information reached the officer commanding that a force of 600 Boers had assembled ten miles off. The following day six of the Rustenburg Rifle Volunteers joined the troops in the fort, the remainder of the inhabitants staying in the town; and on the 27th December the Boers entered and took possession of the latter. A flag of truce was sent demanding the surrender of the fort within an hour. Firing then commenced from the town at 1.30 P.M., ceasing at 6.30 P.M. The only damage which resulted was the loss of all the slaughter-cattle belonging to the garrison, together with six horses and two transport-oxen killed. As it became evident that the transport-oxen could no longer be retained, they, together with two horses, were turned loose at midnight. When effecting this

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the enemy offered some interruption, and volleys were exchanged. The civilian officer in charge of the volunteers had formerly suffered from sunstroke, and the excitement now caused by the siege operations proved too much for him. He went completely out of his mind, and remained a raving lunatic—a grievous encumbrance to the small garrison—to the end of the siege, when, with his wife and family, who had remained in the town, he was removed to Pretoria.

Progress of the siege.

On the 28th December the enemy commenced a trench between the town and fort, 120 yards in front of the former, and about 550 yards from the latter. Walls were also loopholed, and houses placed in a state of defence. The fort was surrounded by vedettes, and communication with the exterior cut off. During the three following days the trenches were increased, and firing came from the direction of the town and a hill to the right of the fort, the garrison of which returned the fire on the 27th and 28th, but were afterwards content with reserving their ammunition for men or horses when good opportunities offered.

Captain Auchinleck wounded.

On the 29th, Captain Auchinleck received a severe rifle-shot wound in the face, which necessitated his relinquishing the command of the fort, then taken over by Lieutenant Despard, until his partial recovery on the 10th January.

Surrender demanded a second time.

On the 1st January, a letter from Mr H. P. Malan, Heidelberg, was sent in under a flag of truce, again demanding surrender, which, however, met with no

different result from the previous one. For the next six days a dropping fire was continued from the town and the hill on the right of the fort.

A cannon brought into action.

On the 8th January a new feature was introduced into the enemy's attack—a gun of very rough and primitive construction, made of coils of iron by an ingenious Dutch blacksmith, throwing a shot of about 6½ lb. weight. This was first placed on a hill 2000 yards away, and opened fire at 6 A.M. The result not proving satisfactory, it was, two hours afterwards, moved by oxen to a small hill 800 yards nearer to the fort. Forty-five rounds were fired from these two positions. At 11 A.M., the fire still proving ineffectual, the gun was dragged to within 600 yards' distance, when the fire from the fort silenced it after fourteen rounds. The enemy were then allowed to carry away three men who had been hit, under a flag of truce. A brisk fire was kept up from the town while the gun was in action. Several quiet days, with but few rifle-shots, followed.

Third demand for surrender.

On the 12th, three civilians, carrying a white flag, approached the fort, and delivered a letter, again demanding surrender. They begged for protection, asserting that, were they to return unsuccessful from their mission, they would be shot. They were then received into the fort. From them it was ascertained that the Boer force at that time numbered 220 men; that their losses were kept quiet, but that one man was known to have been killed and several wounded, while many horses also had been killed. Besides the military, there were now in the fort nine civilians and

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one civil conductor, with seven natives attached to the transport department. Two more civilians, who had arrived from a farm seven hours' ride off, were likewise received into the fort on the 21st; but three others from the town, who, the same day, sought to enter, were refused admittance.

After the withdrawal of the Boer gun on the 8th, the enemy's rifle-fire continued for the remainder of the month intermittently, some days with only occasional shots, followed by others with a pretty constant fire.

The weather had been wet during the first three weeks, but the last fortnight in January was fine. The health of the garrison remained good, and the spirits of the troops excellent, notwithstanding the drawback of only half rations from the commencement.

Despatches from Pretoria.

Several despatches had been received from Pretoria —one dated 20th December, then news to the 9th, and again on the 25th January. The first received from Rustenburg at Pretoria had been sent on the 20th January, and the account given of the defence elicited some complimentary remarks from the Colonel commanding the district.[1]

February.

During February the enemy's fire continued to be of the same desultory character as before, and the

[1] "I congratulate and thank Captain Auchinleck and the troops under his command upon the energetic and successful defence made to the 20th instant of the fort at Rustenburg, against the largely preponderating force of rebels investing it.

"From indirect sources it is reported that seven rebels had been

fatigue-parties were occasionally interfered with in going about their duties. There was every variation of weather and extreme of temperature; sometimes intense heat and thunderstorms by day, alternating with frost and strong cold winds by night. On the 7th, the Boers altered the water-course and dammed up the stream, with the intention apparently—the heavy storms flying about assisting—of flooding the fort; but, beyond making the garrison more uncomfortable, they did not appear to have been successful in their project, and a few days later they turned the water back to its ordinary course.

Early in the month trenches were made near Schmit's Farm, lying 800 yards to the right rear of the fort, but these were thrown down again about a fortnight afterwards. On the morning of the 4th it was seen that another trench was in course of construction about 400 yards to the left rear of the fort. This being so much nearer, and likely to prove inconvenient, Captain Auchinleck decided to attack it. Taking nine men with him the same evening, he sallied forth after dark, and had reached within thirty yards of the work, when the party was challenged and fired on. Three volleys were fired into the trench, obliging its occupants to retire. A brisk fire then opened from all sides on the fort, which indi-

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killed, and that the gun, which occasioned no damage to the fort, and was so quickly silenced by the well-directed fire of Captain Auchinleck's company of the 2/21st Regiment, has been withdrawn and sent elsewhere.

"W. Bellairs,
Colonel Commanding Transvaal District.

"Pretoria, 28*th Jan.* 1881."

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cated that the enemy's vedettes were posted from 100 to 200 yards apart, at distances varying from 400 to 800 yards from the fort all round. The party then fell back. Captain Auchinleck had received a ball through his right elbow-joint—a dangerous wound, which unfortunately led to permanent disablement of the limb. The receipt of the intelligence of this sortie was thus referred to in an order of the day by Colonel Bellairs :—

"PRETORIA, *February* 15, 1881.

"The Colonel commanding greatly regrets to learn that while all is otherwise going on well, and the troops are bravely holding out at the fort at Rustenburg, Captain Auchinleck, 2d Bn. 21st Foot, has been badly wounded in the arm while intrepidly leading a sortie on the rebel trenches on the 4th instant. The services of a courageous and able commander, previously wounded in this campaign, have thus been temporarily lost to the gallant little garrison."[1]

Another trench was thrown up during the month, at about 900 yards' distance from the fort, between the laager on the hill and Schmit's Farm. The laager also was enlarged and strengthened, and apparently there was some accession in numbers.

Communication still continued to be kept up with Pretoria, though one native, carrying despatches to the fort, was believed to have fallen into the hands of the enemy. The health and spirits of the troops remained satisfactory—the average daily number of sick being about seven per cent. On the 18th February, the garrison calculated that there was sufficient

[1] Captain Auchinleck subsequently received the brevet rank of Major in recognition of his services.

preserved meat for fifty, and bread-stuff for ninety days.

Boer gun reopens.

The Boer cannon, after having been silent since the 8th January—withdrawn, it was rumoured, for repair, its breach having been blown out, and the gunners injured—reappeared on the 3d March, and fired six rounds from the laager on the hill, without, however, touching the fort. Then the gun was again withdrawn until the 9th, when thirty shots were fired, only four of which took effect. Thirteen more rounds were fired on the 12th, when the gun again disappeared for repairs. On this day it was seen that during the night the enemy had made another trench 800 to 900 yards' distance from the right front of the fort.

Notification of intended armistice.

On the 14th March the Boer Commandant sent in a flag of truce, notifying that an armistice for eight days had been concluded between Sir Evelyn Wood and the Boer Commandant-General; but, as this cessation of hostilities was not to have any effect at Rustenburg until the arrival of eight days' provisions sent by Sir Evelyn Wood, the usual desultory firing was continued, and the gun was again brought into action, still without effect. The garrison were by no means satisfied as to the genuineness of the Boer notification of intended armistice, and many were inclined to suspect a deep trap on the part of the enemy. On the 30th, however, all doubt on the subject was dispelled, the notification that peace had been made being brought in by an English officer—Lieutenant Ryder

Peace.

CHAP. V. of the 60th Rifles—from Sir Evelyn Wood's camp, some days before the waggon with provisions reached the place, or the eight days' armistice could have commenced!

The health of the garrison, notwithstanding exposure and privation for a period of three months, continued fair to the end. No fresh meat or stores had been obtained from outside until towards the close of the siege, when the intelligence and courage of a civilian in the fort, who went out for the purpose, was instrumental in passing an ox in through the enemy's lines.

The casualties of the little garrison had been few. Besides Captain Auchinleck—twice so badly wounded—only three men were wounded,—two dangerously, and one slightly.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SIEGE OF MARABASTADT FORT.[1]

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Position.

MARABASTADT, a village of only five or six houses—the owners of which were principally storekeepers, the first distant a mile from the last—is situated in the northern part of the Transvaal, in the Zoutpansberg district. In the early part of 1880 it was decided to create a military station in this far-away region—165 miles from Pretoria—for the purpose of asserting the supremacy of the Government, and overawing the surrounding large native population,—estimated at between 300,000 and 400,000 in the Zoutpansberg, and about half the number in the Waterberg district. Captain Campbell, with two companies of the 94th Regiment—the first British troops which had been through that part of the province—reached the place in February.

The site for the camp—on the slope of a hill north-west of the village, and about 800 yards from the nearest house—had been previously chosen by a staff

[1] Some of Captain Brook's despatches, giving accounts of the progress of the siege, appeared in the Blue-books.

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officer, and instructions given that the fort should be thrown up thereon. Accordingly, the fort was at once commenced, and everybody, feeling his own comfort depended upon his industry, threw himself with a will into the work of completing it, and making bricks, mortar, &c., for the erection of houses and huts for officers and men. In due time the detachment had housed themselves, and had done more to render themselves comfortable than any of the other stations in the country, and that without extraneous assistance of any kind. The marked capacity and energy exhibited by all ranks in producing this result elicited deserved commendation from the general officer commanding.

Site of fort unsuitable.

The site selected for the fort was, from the nature of the ground and surroundings, most unsuitable. All the officers are said to have been agreed on this point, and to have been of opinion that the best position would have been on the other side of the Sand Spruit, to the west of the village. After-experience fully showed that they were right. The station was inspected about three months later by Major-General Hon. H. H. Clifford, but no alteration was apparently deemed necessary; perhaps none was made owing to the great labour which would have been thereby entailed on the troops, all their previous good work going for nothing.

Feelings of inhabitants.

When the troops first arrived in the district, the Boers showed anything but a friendly feeling towards them. Their only previous experience of Englishmen

had perhaps been of traders, who had probably made the most of them. But when they found that we paid them well for whatever we required, and showed them common civility, their demeanour gradually altered, until in a few months the military were on the best of terms with all around. The officers were well known to all the Boers in the neighbourhood. With a fair amount of sport, shooting, riding, driving, &c., the days were passed as well as could be expected in such an out-of-the-way uncivilised part. Nothing serious occurred to disturb the quiet monotony of this life until the end of November. There was certainly about the period of the change of Ministry in England an unsettled feeling among some, who expected that the new Government would annul the annexation; but when it was officially announced that this would not be done, the feeling apparently subsided. Towards the end of November, though, rumours came of lawless proceedings having taken place in the Potchefstroom district, nearly 300 miles away.

Garrison reduced.

On the afternoon of the 29th November, a special messenger arrived from Pretoria, with orders for one company, under Captain Campbell, to march at once, as light as possible, to be stationed, as a temporary measure, at Pretoria. Within a few hours Captain Campbell was on the road, with about 60 men and a mule-waggon; and, as previously mentioned, made such good haste that he reached Pretoria without molestation in ten days.

The garrison now left consisted of only about 60

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men, under the command of Captain E. S. Brook, with two other officers—Lieutenant F. G. W. Jones, and Surgeon Harding, A.M.D. The position was at once further strengthened, and a store of wood collected, brought from the wood-bush about ten miles off. But while such prudent preparations were made for possible contingencies, it was considered most improbable that the troops in this outlying part would be affected by Boer disturbances, which, it was thought, would be confined to the Pretoria and more southern districts.

Imprudent action of civil authorities.

Notwithstanding such peaceable anticipations, the quiet of the neighbourhood was soon rudely disturbed through the action of the civil authorities, acting under orders from Pretoria, in arresting three Boers—Roy Barend Vorster, Christoffel Snyman, and Franz van Dyk—on charges of having urged the native chief, Maleppa, to join the Boers in turning the English out of the country. Mr Dahl, the Native Commissioner of the district, had instructions from Pretoria to hold a sort of preliminary inquiry into these charges, and he is said to have been privately informed that on no account were the accused to be allowed out on bail. The Native Commissioner, the Landdrost of the district, and the officer commanding the troops were accordingly associated together, and the investigation was held before them, about the 25th December, in a tent pitched for the purpose three hundred yards from the fort. The action taken by the Government in this matter had created considerable excitement in the district. At an early

hour a large number of Boers were on the move, travelling along the roads towards the camp, the officer commanding having previously notified, through the Landdrost, that they would be allowed to be present at the Court, provided they were unarmed, and did not bring their waggons within a mile of the fort. It was afterwards ascertained that they had left their arms at a farmhouse two and a half miles distant. About a hundred Boers were present. The investigation being proceeded with, a good many natives were examined, but their evidence against the prisoners was wholly insufficient to prove the charges. The three accused men were then remanded back to confinement; but Captain Brook having strongly advised the Native Commissioner to release them, that official finally acquiesced. Bail was, however, taken, and they joined their friends, when all left with every sign of good feeling. Captain Brook's tact, common-sense, and decision were well shown in thus arranging what was near becoming a serious difficulty.

Commencement of hostilities.

The Zoutpansberg races, which had been got up by the officers and some others, were held on the other side of the village on the 29th December. For some time the soldiers had not been allowed out of camp, and on this day they were all kept in the fort. All but the last race—a hurdle-race between Captain Brook and Dr Harding—had come off, and the start for this was just about to be made, when a man from the camp galloped up and gave Captain Brook a few lines from

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Lieutenant Jones, who had remained behind on duty. Their purport was of such a grave nature that Captain Brook at once rode to the camp. There he found a cipher despatch had just been brought in from Pretoria, giving an outline of the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster, and directing him to be prepared for attack, to husband his ammunition, and get in supplies.[1]

Energetic proceedings.

Captain Brook at once issued a proclamation of martial law, and called upon all loyal subjects to come to the fort and assist in putting down the rebellion. His appeal was well responded to. The races had fortunately brought together a good many Englishmen, and all who could manage to join came in—about thirty. Lieutenant Gleniston of the Police and Mr Stewart were despatched respectively to Captain Thompson, commanding the detachment of the Transvaal Mounted Police—about fifty Bastards—then stationed at Wood-Bush, forty miles further north—

[1] The following were some of the early messages despatched to Marabastadt (see Blue-book [c. 2866], p. 158):—

"*December* 23.—Be prepared for attack. Husband ammunition; concentrate stores and get in supplies. Communication around Pretoria cut off. Potchefstroom invested. 94th, from Lydenburg, taken prisoners, after heavy losses. Reinforcements from Natal expected.

"*December* 29.—Received letter of 17th. Potchefstroom Fort holds out. Three companies 94th and one of 58th at Standerton; reinforcements coming from Natal. 94th losses, coming from Lydenburg, very heavy; 75 dead, 79 wounded—Nairne, M'Swiney, Harrison (dead); Anstruther, Hume, Carter (dangerously wounded). Boer losses not known.

"*January* 2.—Forts at Potchefstroom, as far as known, holding out; reinforcements from Natal coming up. Rebels took large quantities of clothing and accoutrements from 94th; this may be used for purposes of surprise. Great caution should be exercised in identifying armed bodies in our uniform before allowing approach.

"W. B."

and to the Native Commissioner, residing some miles off, at Klipsdam, warning and directing them to concentrate with their men, arms, &c., at the fort. Captain Thompson acted with rapidity and circumspection, and brought his detachment safely in on the following morning. Mr Dahl, through a wrong interpretation of the order delivered, thought he would do better to remain where he was, and, in consequence, was taken prisoner the next day with all his arms and ammunition.

The receipt of the cipher message caused renewed energy to be given day and night towards strengthening the fort—an intrenchment of 25 yards square. A well was also commenced, but the nature of the soil rendered the work very laborious and tedious. All provisions found in the stores and houses in the vicinity were seized for the use of the garrison, as also supplies of forage, vegetables, &c. The Boers were at this time in two laagers—one at Sand Spruit, eight miles distant, and the other at Botha's Farm, six miles. They did not attempt to interrupt these proceedings, perhaps not being then sufficiently organised. On the 11th January the Boer Commandant, Barend Vorster, sent a letter to Captain Brook to the effect that, unless he ceased from further seizures of corn, the property of the Burghers, steps would be taken to stop, what he termed, such unnecessary acts. The following day the Landdrost of the district received at the hands of an armed party a letter from the Boer Government, dated Heidelberg, 6th January, desiring him to surrender his keys, whereupon his

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office and some public moneys were taken forcible possession of.

Skirmish.

On the 19th January a mounted patrol—fifteen police under Captain Thompson, and ten volunteers under Conductor Stott of the Commissariat staff—were sent to reconnoitre the Sand Spruit laager. When five miles out, they were suddenly attacked by a greatly superior force. The police, who were in advance, were driven in, leaving one man killed and two wounded in the hands of the enemy. Two others were also wounded. The party then fell back on the camp, the retirement being covered by the volunteers. Several Boers were said to have been hit. The Boer Commandant afterwards sent to inform Captain Brook that he could send a cart, with a flag of truce, to remove the dead man; that the two wounded prisoners would be properly cared for; and that he, Captain Brook, must keep quiet for the future, or stand the consequences. From this message it would seem as if the Boer Commandant did not at this period desire to make any direct attack on the garrison, provided the latter did not move out.

Loss of cattle and horses.

After this skirmish, however, the enemy's patrols approached nearer. The high ground north of the camp admitted of any number concealing themselves during the night, in readiness to surprise or attack the vedettes and outlying parties proceeding from the camp at daybreak to take up positions for the protection of the cattle and horses when grazing. These outposts were frequently thus driven in, and the

grazing-ground restricted. About the third week in February the police horses and most of the oxen were captured. Our vedettes were surprised and fell back, when, with almost incredible celerity, the oxen were driven off, and some of the horses having been hit by the enemy's fire, the whole stampeded. After this the enemy occupied the ridges of the hills commanding the fort, and closely invested the position, patrolling constantly around out of range. Fire was kept up on the fort during the day.

Boer works.

About the end of February, the enemy threw up earthworks on commanding sites at 800 yards' distance. These were, with the exception of one on what was called the Signal Kopje, open to the rear, to enable their being fired into from trenches placed on positions further back. In case of serious attack, the defenders were to deliver a rapid fire, and then retire on their second line. The Boers were well aware that, even if we took one of their front positions, we should not be able to continue to hold it, and anticipated inflicting greater loss by falling back and drawing us on.

Method of posting sentries.

As soon as it became dark, sentries were pushed out from the fort towards the enemy's positions, advantage being taken of any slight rise in the ground or other covering offering. This was also the Boer method of guarding against surprise, their sentries lying down in pairs. For night defence the Boers were supplied with elephant guns loaded with loopers, formidable weapons at close quarters.

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Boer cannon.

On the 17th March, two old ship carronades—the one a 6-pounder and the other a 3- or 4-pounder—which had been discovered on Mr Dahl's premises, were brought into action. The round-shot used, being made of beaten iron, taken from the Ersterling Gold Mining Company's works, must have occasioned considerable labour in their manufacture. Considering the nature of these guns and their projectiles, the Boers served them with fair accuracy, and such concealment that it was found impossible to silence them. Working-parties had to be employed by reliefs through each night to repair the damage done, and render the weak points of the fort safe. Sergeant-Major Freeth of the police was mortally wounded by one of the round-shots the first day the cannons opened; but from then to the close of the siege the garrison were so well kept under cover that, though there were many narrow shaves, no one was seriously injured by them. A man was kept constantly on the look-out. As soon as he saw smoke from the discharge of a gun, he blew a warning note on a railway whistle, when immediately all sought cover. Many casualties would have occurred had not this order been rigidly insisted upon. Latterly, taking cover on such a warning became so much a habit, that, after fighting was over, much laughter was caused when, on a man blowing the whistle, numbers ran for cover.

As Captain Brook was able to keep his men sufficiently sheltered from the Boer fire, he did not carry out an attack, at first projected, on the battery.

With the object of maturing such a plan, he had sent out some of the Bastard Police at night to obtain information of the nature of the position. These men managed to pass through the enemy's lines, and to lie hidden the following day on the range of hills to the south of the fort, taking observations, and then return after dark. The idea was thus formed to pass out similarly a portion of the garrison during the night, and at daybreak to surprise the battery by an attack in front and rear. The main difficulty would have been to have escaped the observation of the enemy's patrols, so constantly moving from one position to another; but it was thought that the sortie could have been successfully accomplished.

Natives.

The natives of the district were most loyal. At the commencement, when the intelligence arrived that hostilities had broken out, Captain Brook had summoned all the chiefs—representing some 50,000 fighting men—and had ordered them to keep quiet. They could not, however, understand why they were not allowed to help us in fighting the Boers. Being further informed that the garrison required corn and mealies, supplies were run in by natives at night. Frequent messages passed by their agency to and from Pretoria; once or twice, though, failing through capture. Attempts were also made to communicate with the garrison at Lydenburg, but it was believed without success.

Water-supply.

The well was sunk to a depth of 35 feet. Owing to continuous rains it was frequently filled to the

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top, but it was always somewhat uncertain whether the supply would continue sufficient when the dry weather set in. Water was, however, obtained throughout from the Spruit, flowing two hundred yards from the fort. Fatigue-parties, with all available buckets, covered by armed parties, were sent out nightly, when least likely to attract observation. Although often these parties must have been heard at work, yet no determined attempt was made to stop them.

Sunday was the only day when water was allowed to be used for ablutionary purposes, and then but one barrel for about 140 persons. Almost by mutual consent there was a cessation of firing on that day. Once or twice a volley had been fired from our side, which was returned; but if let alone, the Boers would remain quiet.

Fresh-meat supply.

Fresh meat was issued throughout, the last beast having been killed the day the news of the peace was received. Previous to the investment a cattle-kraal had been built, with stone walls five feet high, close to the fort. This sheltered the oxen which had not been captured by the Boers in February, and they were kept alive by feeding them with forage.

Sanitary conditions.

The sanitary arrangements were, of course, of vital importance—the men being cooped up in such a confined space. The proof how well they were carried out—under the supervision of Surgeon Harding—was the fact that the only patients were those who had been wounded.

On the 22d March, the Boer Commandant sent a letter, under a flag of truce, proposing a meeting between himself and Captain Brook, in order that he might acquaint the latter with orders he had received from his Government. A meeting accordingly took place, midway between the two positions, when Captain Brook was informed of the armistice concluded between Sir Evelyn Wood and Commandant-General Joubert, and was given a copy of its terms. Captain Brook, however, told Assistant Commandant-General Vorster that, as the papers were not signed by the English General, he was unable to take the information as authentic. The parties thereupon returned to their respective positions, and the usual firing recommenced on both sides.

Notice of armistice agreement.

On the 2d April, after an unusually hot fire had been going on through the morning, a large party of mounted Boers, headed by a man carrying a white flag, were seen approaching by the road. Halting at a distance of three-quarters of a mile from the fort, the flag of truce advanced alone. Firing thereupon ceased, and Mr O'Reilly was sent out to meet the Boer messenger. He quickly came back with the intelligence that Captain Sampson, late of Nourse's Horse, had arrived with despatches from Pretoria, to the effect that peace had been made. White flags were now hoisted on all the Boer positions, and the troops began to exercise their limbs by walking and running about, a novel sensation to them in broad daylight. A meeting took place in the afternoon between the officer commanding the garrison and the

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Boer leaders at Mr Maré's house in the village, when the English despatches and orders were read. But as the Boer General had not received any similar communication from Commandant-General Joubert, he declined to move from his positions. Next day, however, his orders having arrived, the Boers dispersed. The terms of peace were received by the garrison with disappointment, and by the English volunteers with dismay.

Evacuation of Marabastadt.

On the 13th April, the order having arrived for the withdrawal of the company of the 94th Regiment, transport waggons and oxen were hired of their late enemies; and the troops, accompanied by the police and most of the volunteers, left two days later for Pretoria. They reached that station on the morning of the 26th—a good march for men who could not boast of a sound pair of boots amongst them.

Casualties.

The casualties on our side during the siege amounted to thirteen—five killed and eight wounded. Until the news of peace came and liberated the garrison from their hiding-places, the Boers had been under the belief that their shot and bullets, which they saw so constantly dropping into the little fort—a space of only 25 yards square—must have had the effect of killing or wounding most of the defenders; and they had been confirmed in this view from hearing—as they asserted—the garrison nightly digging graves! But though the casualties were fewer than might have been expected—from the fact that the fort was commanded all round—yet the siege was

close and determined, and to show but for a moment, even by a loophole, would quickly attract a fire. The Boer losses were not ascertained. At the close, the garrison had still remaining provisions sufficient for two months longer.[1]

[1] Captain Brook having succeeded to a majority in his regiment, subsequently received the brevet rank of Lieut.-Colonel in recognition of his services.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIEGE OF LYDENBURG FORT.[1]

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Garrison.

THE garrison of Lydenburg—a village of some trading importance, due to its vicinity to the Gold Fields, and similar in buildings and character to other small towns in the Transvaal—consisted of the 94th Regiment, until, as already related, at the instance of the Administrator, these troops were, with the exception of a small detachment left to guard military stores, withdrawn on the 5th December 1880. The selection of the officer to remain behind in command of the post was left to the discretion of Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther; the name of the senior lieutenant, who was also the regimental musketry instructor — but whose services in this capacity were not at the time required—being only suggested from headquarters for this responsible duty. Such, however, was the high opinion and confidence entertained of his abilities by his commanding officer, that, although the

[1] For an account of the splendid defence made by the British troops in this quarter, see a little book, entitled 'Peace and War,' by Mrs Long —published by Messrs Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, in 1882—from which we have largely drawn.

junior officer of his regiment, and but about twenty-two years of age, second Lieutenant Long—a married man, with his wife present—was chosen.

Thus left, with 54 non-commissioned officers and men of his regiment, a sergeant and 7 sappers of the Royal Engineers — who had been supervising the building of barrack-huts—and 8 non-commissioned officers and men of the Commissariat and Hospital Corps; with Surgeon Falvey in medical charge, and Conductor Parsons for supplies,—Mr Long quickly set all hands to work to strengthen the position he was instructed from Pretoria to take up, in preparedness to repel any Boer attack. Carrying out Colonel Bellairs's orders, the Commissariat supplies, hitherto kept in a hired building in the town, were removed, and the camp, situated on a rise above the town, abandoned, thus concentrating men and stores in the hutment recently erected a short distance from the camp. The huts were eight in number, each 50 feet long by 18 feet broad, built of stone, with thatched roofs, and placed lengthways in two rows, with 30 feet interval between the rows. Mr Long caused these buildings to be connected all round by stone walls or traverses between, the position thus enclosed forming a parallelogram of about 78 yards by 20 yards, dignified with the appellation of a fort, and named, after Mrs Long, Fort Mary.[1]

The fort.

The Landdrost of the place declared to the com-

[1] See *ante*, note, p. 79.

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Townspeople refuse to co-operate in defence.

manding officer that there was no cause for alarm, and not the smallest chance of an insurrection. However, as grave rumours were current, pointing to a very disturbed condition of the country, Mr Long, on the 16th December, very judiciously called upon Mr Roth, the Landdrost, to inform the inhabitants that any having reason to fear the consequences of a rising might remove with their families to the Dutch laager—an old walled place formerly used as a protection against the natives—where tents would be provided for them, and, being only 150 yards from the huts, they could co-operate with and come under the protection of the military. The reply sent back was that the inhabitants would, in the event of the Boers invading the town, remain neutral, taking no part either in its defence or otherwise. It thus became evident that no aid could be expected from the townspeople without pressure such as the small detachment of troops was unequal to exercising over them. Even the English and so-called loyal portion, with but very few exceptions, looked solely to their own personal interests, and considered that these would be best served by abstaining from siding with or in any way favouring the military.

This being so, Mr Long did not delay; but the same day—16th December—took energetic measures to render his position more secure. The huts being commanded from the Dutch laager, and the military force inadequate to occupy the latter position as well, he notified that, the inhabitants having declined to occupy the laager, it became imperative to destroy

the work, in order to comply with the instructions he had received to place the huts in a proper state of defence. An answer came—"If Mr Long considered it necessary, he could carry out his plan, but hoped the British Government would restore it at its own expense." Within an hour after the receipt of this message, the side of the work fronting the huts was blown up and levelled. Some walls and temporary buildings left on the adjoining old camp-ground, which might have offered shelter to an enemy, were subsequently similarly destroyed.

News of the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster.

The belief professed by the Landdrost that no rising need be apprehended, was, however, certainly not entertained by all civilians at this period, for we find Mrs Long, in her little work, relating that, on the 18th December—two days before the occurrence of the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster—her husband was conversing with Mr Stafford Parker, a merchant of Lydenburg, who, she says, had lived many years in the Transvaal, knew most of the influential Boers, understood their language, and was well aware of their determination to rise and regain their independence, when that gentleman expressed himself as follows: "Mark me, sir, if the Boers attack the 94th on the road, the troops will never reach Pretoria." It was not, though, until five days later—the evening of the 23d December—that this sad prediction—previously looked upon as mere idle talk—was found to have been verified. The evil news was brought in by a native boy, who had acted as driver to one of the Government waggons which had left Lydenburg

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with the 94th Regiment on the 5th December, and was immediately after confirmed by the arrival of the post-cart driver.

Measures taken to improve the defence.

The works were now proceeded with with increased energy. The presence of experienced men like Mr Parsons—who, before being appointed to the Commissariat staff, had served many years in the Royal Engineers—and Sergeant Day of the Royal Engineers—who was able to contribute the practical knowledge he had gained at the defence of Eckowe the previous year,—materially assisted, and rendered Mr Long's task easier. Native labour was obtained from neighbouring kraals by the liberal payment of two shillings a-day a man; and a mule and an ox waggon were kept constantly employed moving backwards and forwards, the former collecting ant-hills for miles around—affording, when pulverised and mixed with water, excellent material for cementing stone walls—and the latter bringing in stones from the destroyed laager, camp buildings, and walls. Thus another "daagered"—cemented—stone wall sprang up on three sides of the position, 9 feet beyond the one previously built, want of sufficient time and labour preventing the completion of the fourth side, facing the town, which was about 1000 yards distant. At first 4½ feet high, it was later on raised by sand-bags, loopholed, to over 6 feet, and its breadth increased to 5 feet. Outside this wall, and also on the front towards the town, a ditch was excavated, 6 feet wide by 3 feet deep. Traverses were thrown up in suitable places to lessen the effect of the

enemy's fire in the interior; and afterwards, when the attack drew closer, a trench, 3 feet wide, was constructed, the length of the fort, between the huts, to serve as a covert-way for the men to pass along in heavy cannonading. Six mines, with charges of 50 lb. of powder each, were constructed at distances of 50 yards, connected by wires with the fort. A building, 180 yards from the fort, which had been used as the officers' camp mess-hut, was also undermined. Wire entanglements were laid down, and wheels and broken waggons placed at 30 yards' distance around the fort, as obstacles to any attempted rush of mounted men. The roofs being thatched, and liable to be set on fire, were, as far as possible, covered with tarpaulins.

Excellent spirit displayed by the 94th Regiment.

When it is remembered that these heavy labours had to be carried on under a semi-tropical sun during the hot season of the year, while the usual military night watches and precautions could not be neglected, it will be conceded that the little garrison deserved immense credit for its high spirit under disadvantageous circumstances, working as it did in the midst of a hostile people, two hundred miles away, cut off from all communication with headquarters, and exposed to many depressing influences,—the disastrous news of the losses sustained by their corps at Bronkhorst Spruit; the fact that all assistance was withheld by the English inhabitants of Lydenburg; and reports, said to have been sedulously spread by some of the leading English townspeople, with a view to causing neutrality and preventing others taking up arms, to

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the effect that the troops must necessarily be annihilated in less than half an hour after the opening of an attack. Apart from their high qualifications as combatants, the 94th Regiment—now called the 2d Battalion of the Connaught Rangers—ever in the Transvaal showed themselves as good willing workers, when real hard labour was required of them. It was so in peace-time and during war,—at Fort Albert in the Lulu mountains, at Marabastadt, at Standerton, at Pretoria, as well as here at Lydenburg,—every man at all times ready and willing to do his quota of work. No regiment in the Queen's service performed their heavy fatigue duties better or more cheerily under difficulties and dangers.

Commissariat supplies.

A waggon with supplies from Pretoria having evidently fallen into the hands of the insurgents, Mr Parsons at once took steps to purchase from the local merchants such stores as appeared necessary. The garrison were now well provisioned for a lengthened siege, having about three months' supplies of preserved meat; eight months' of bread-stuffs, tea, and cocoa; seven weeks' of fresh potatoes; besides a fair quantity of preserved vegetables, rice, sugar, salt, pepper, &c., and plenty of hospital extras. Bricks were secured, and an oven built for baking bread. A well was commenced. A large quantity of rifle ammunition having been left on the departure of the headquarters of the regiment—over 200,000 rounds—an underground magazine was constructed for its safe custody.

Surgeon Falvey also exercised much forethought in making timely hospital arrangements. He pur-

chased sundry medical necessaries likely to be wanted, and secured the only case of amputation instruments in the town, the military surgical case belonging to the station having been taken away by the medical officer accompanying the headquarters of the 94th Regiment.

Mr Long took the precaution to request the Landdrost to cause all arms and ammunition to be lodged in the fort; but although this demand met with some response, there is reason to believe that rifles and powder were held back, and handed over by the merchants to the Boers.

A few volunteers join.

Finally, the garrison was strengthened by three volunteers coming in from the Gold Fields, and six others joining from the town. There were, likewise, one civilian and ten natives attached to the Commissariat department, who were retained in the fort. The Rev. Father Walsh, who had acted as Roman Catholic chaplain to the troops in the Zulu and Sekukuni campaigns, and was then residing at Lydenburg, also determined to throw in his lot with the soldiers—most of whom belonged to his persuasion—undeterred by former trying siege experiences when shut up in Fort Eckowe. Mrs Long—the counsels of some townspeople and offers to take charge of her notwithstanding—insisted upon remaining with her husband, and braving the inevitable hardships and dangers which must result from her decision.

Boer demand for surrender.

During the afternoon of the 27th December the Landdrost appeared before the fort, accompanied by

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a Boer, who, on being met by Mr Long, he introduced as Mr Dietrick Muller, deputed by the Boer Government to demand the surrender of the garrison. Mr Muller, alluding to the defeat of the troops at Bronkhorst Spruit, pointed out that the garrison were like rats in a trap, without chance of escape, and, resistance being useless, must inevitably fall similarly unless they now laid down their arms. Mr Long replied that his orders were to hold his position, and until he received fresh instructions, he could not act otherwise.

Short armistice agreed upon.

The defences being still far from completed, Mr Long was desirous of gaining time and delaying the attack, which seemed imminent. He therefore proposed sending a messenger to Pretoria to ask for further instructions in the circumstances in which he was placed. Mr Muller fell in with this idea, and it

Messenger sent to Pretoria.

was agreed that Mr Kuhneissen, a sheriff of the district, should leave for this purpose the same night, hostilities being meanwhile delayed until he could return with an answer in five days. This successful temporisation proved valuable. The garrison, in this interval gained, worked day and night on the defences, and were thus enabled to resist the lengthened siege which took place. Mr Kuhneissen delivered the letter he had been intrusted with to Colonel Bellairs—the only communication received from Lydenburg at headquarters during the war. He told of the excellent spirit and earnest way in which the little garrison was working for its defence, even Mrs Long giving additional encouragement to the men by

herself taking a part in the rough labour. Mr Kuhneissen received sealed despatches to take back; but these not being favourable to the interests of the Boer Government, were taken from him, and he himself kept for some days in close confinement.[1]

Fatal accident to a volunteer.

In making the various preparations to withstand attack, a fatal accident occurred on the 1st January. Volunteer M'Donald had been instructed to clear an iron pipe, forming part of an Abyssinian pump, of some damp gunpowder. Heedlessly he placed one end of the pipe in a furnace, when the powder, drying up, exploded, causing such injury to M'Donald that he died the same day. A native, who was holding the other end of the pipe, had his arm shattered, rendering amputation necessary.

Boer force appears.

On the 3d January, parties of Boers, with waggons and the Republican flag flying, commenced to arrive, and took up a position about two miles off on the Middleburg road. These were joined two days later by a further large mounted body, who drew up and formed line with military precision, showing how much they must have profited by drill. The same evening information was obtained of an intention on the part of some natives, who had been retained up to this time to assist in the works, and who were said to have been tampered with by the Boers, to set fire to the thatched roofs of the huts, and thus create confusion and facilitate attack. These men were quickly turned adrift, and a possible disaster so prevented.

Natives tampered with.

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2866), pp. 158, 159.

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Commencement of attack.

On the 6th the attack was commenced. While a party of 250 Boers entered the town and carried out the ceremony of hoisting the flag and proclaiming the Republic, patrols were observed quietly drawing round the fort. At 10.30 A.M. a flag of truce delivered to the commandant a letter from Commandant-General Piet Joubert, dated Heidelberg, 24th December, demanding the surrender of the garrison. This letter was accompanied by another, also from Joubert, directing the Assistant Commandant-General for the Lydenburg district, Mr J. P. Steyn, to grant honourable and careful treatment in case of friendly and quiet submission, but ending grimly, "If nothing of the kind happens, you know what you have to do." Lieutenant Long soon replied, in writing, refusing the terms, and informing the Boer commandant that any truce made must be considered at an end. The receipt of this answer caused a perceptible commotion in the town, people in all directions hurriedly seeking the shelter of houses. The Boer force was now estimated at between 500 and 600 men. Taking advantage of every inequality of ground and obstacle offering the means of concealment, they managed, while being themselves seldom visible, to approach the fort to within 200 or 300 yards. A fire was opened from all sides by the garrison at 11.45 A.M., which was vigorously replied to, and kept up by both parties until 3 P.M., when it slackened, but continued in a desultory manner through the night. The garrison were untouched, the high parapets and traverses being found to answer their purposes most effectually.

Fresh demand for surrender of fort.

The following day the firing again became heavier, the enemy sheltering themselves mainly in the outlying houses of the town nearest the fort, one of which, recently used as the military hospital, was only about 400 yards off. During the night, some Boers being observed to occupy the ruins of the old Dutch laager, an elephant gun—one of three, amongst others, which had been given up by the town—carrying an eight-ounce ball, was mounted on a block of wood, and brought to bear with effect on that quarter. This gun, however, subsequently burst.

Boer cannon opens.

On the morning of the 8th the garrison were startled by a cannon—probably a ship's gun—unexpectedly opening from the vicinity of the old hospital, but six shots then fired passed harmlessly over the fort.

Day sortie.

On the 9th, annoyance being experienced from the close vicinity of some of the enemy, who had established themselves among the ruins of the old Dutch laager, Conductor Parsons volunteered and gallantly led out a party to dislodge them. Starting at noon with six non-commissioned officers and men, three natives also going with them, the Boers were driven out and made to retire precipitately down the hill. Then throwing down some shelter the latter had constructed, the party returned under a heavy cross-fire, but with only one of the natives wounded.

Message from the town.

The same day further excitement was created by a little terrier dog bringing in a message tied round his neck from a friendly hand in the town. It gave the information that the Boers had been quarrelling

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amongst themselves and with Dietrick Muller, for his having so imprudently allowed the garrison five days' armistice, pending which they were enabled to add so materially to the strength of the fort; it also added that the soldiers fired too high, their shots passing over the houses. This latter hint was taken, and the shooting improved.

Gallant conduct of Conductor Parsons.

The enemy's fire was less brisk on the 10th and 11th. Towards midnight on the former day, Mr Parsons again distinguished himself. Crawling out to the old Dutch laager, from which some Boers were firing, he coolly lighted a hand-grenade and pitched it amongst them, causing a loud explosion and a fresh stampede, with the good result that the enemy did not reoccupy that ground for some days.

Progress of the siege.

The enemy reopened artillery-fire on the morning of the 12th—this time with an additional gun, placed at the civil prison, in the market-square, about 1000 yards' distance, the guns being 6 or 7 pounders. For six hours it was continued, many of the shots proving effective, and penetrating the upper walls —18 inches thick—and roofs of the huts. The hospital hut especially suffered, although surmounted by the Geneva flag; and it was deemed advisable to remove the patients, though at some risk, in the midst of the fire, to a more sheltered one. There were by this several wounded men, as well as some cases of enteric fever, under treatment, the latter no doubt brought on by bad water. The breaches made by the cannon-shot were quickly repaired by means of sand-bags and bales of blankets.

Heavy musketry-fire was also kept up on both sides, the garrison giving particular attention to keeping down the artillery-fire.

A similar fire was resumed the next day, though not kept up for so long; and on the 14th the enemy was discovered to have removed one of their guns to a battery constructed during the night about three-quarters of a mile south of the fort. Thirteen shots came from this direction; but only one entered the fort, and the position was afterwards apparently abandoned.

The three days which followed were comparatively quiet, only occasional rifle-shots being fired. Advantage was therefore taken to repair damages and further strengthen the position. On the night of the 17th, though, the enemy opened a heavy fire on all sides of the fort, which was not slackened until the morning. The garrison, fearing an intention to endeavour to rush the fort, replied by a raking fire all round at intervals.

Fresh meat obtained.

A welcome two days' supply of fresh meat was obtained one day. Some calves having incautiously approached, attracted by the luxuriant grass growing around the fort, three were brought down by a volley fired upon them, and their carcasses fetched in after dark.

A sad incident.

On the 16th, a horseman, riding along the road, holding a white handkerchief, was recognised as an English gold-digger, named Green, and called into the fort. He had been in Lydenburg when the Boers

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occupied the town, but had now obtained a pass to the Gold Fields to look after some of his property, leaving his wife and children behind. He agreed to get a telegraphic message conveyed to Delagoa Bay for transmission to England, Mr Long offering him £100 if successful. Although advised to remain in the fort until after dark, he preferred leaving before, saying that he should then be more afraid of our men than of the Boers by day. The unfortunate man fell a victim to his over-assurance and imprudence in holding communication with the troops, being taken prisoner on his return by a Boer outpost, and shot. His sad fate was not, however, known to the garrison until hostilities had ended.

Forty-eight cannon-shots were fired, during the 18th, from the direction of the prison and old military hospital, the huts being frequently struck; but, though some remarkable escapes occurred, no serious damage was done, the sentries warning all to take cover when the flash of a discharge was seen. The same evening, when the artillery-fire had ceased, Conductor Parsons, with Sergeant Day and five sappers, covered by a supporting party of eight men of the 94th Regiment, under Sergeant Cowdy, sallied forth cautiously to the ruins of the old Dutch laager —which had been again occupied by the enemy— intending to lay a mine. They, however, failed in this purpose, being discovered after working for some time, and obliged to fall back under heavy fire, though fortunately without casualty.

Night sortie.

The morning after, two men—Private Hatherell, of

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Fatal act of hardihood.

the 94th Regiment, and Volunteer Stewart—took it into their heads to endeavour to emulate the conduct of the party which had gone out the previous day, and, without orders, left the fort and went towards the Dutch laager. Suddenly fired upon by some Boers concealed among the ruins, Hatherell fell mortally wounded, but Stewart succeeded in getting back unhurt. On its being seen that the former could not rise, Private W. J. Robinson, of the 94th Regiment, and Volunteer Holmes M'Dougall courageously went out under a sharp fire, and carried him in.

For a few days there was comparative peace, the enemy being apparently occupied in protecting their gun by the old military hospital, with an earthwork and some iron targets brought from the rifle-range, a little distance off. They also, under cover of night, constructed shelter at the further side of the Dutch laager. As it seemed to be their intention to place a gun in this latter position, it was deemed advisable to sap towards and construct a covert-way to command the spot. A working-party was accordingly started on the 22d, Mr Parsons going out to work with the men. A large barrel filled with old tents was used as a sap roller at the head of the trench. The sap had proceeded about 10 yards, when Sergeant Cowdy, who was in command of a covering party of the 94th Regiment, was shot through the head and body. The dying man was brought in by Private Maurice Whelan of the 94th Regiment and Civilian Conductor Charles Jurgessen, a Dane attached to the Commissariat Department, who, regardless of the firing then going on,

Intrepid behaviour of some men.

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rushed out to his assistance.[1] Sergeants Day, R.E., and Allen, A.H. Corps, were also conspicuous in hurrying out to render aid. This, including a man of the 94th Regiment, who succumbed at this time to an attack of enteric fever, was the fourth death in the little garrison. The further progress of the sap was now interrupted, the work being considered too dangerous. Mr Long himself, accompanied by a volunteer, set an example by working in the trench; but, finally, the attempt was for a time abandoned.

Scarcity of water.

On the 23d January water was found to be running short, and the garrison were during the succeeding fortnight in great straits on account of its deficiency, occurring as it did during the summer heats, and when great labour and exposure was required of every man. The season, following its normal course, should at this period have been wet, but in fact turned out unusually dry. All that could be done was to deepen the existing well and commence a fresh one—laborious operations—in the hope of reaching more water, and to take steps to catch some from any passing storm. The daily issue to each man was, on the 31st, restricted to three pints; and, on the 3d February, it was further reduced to one pint. There being a supply of bottled beer in the commissariat store, a pint bottle was now issued to each man daily who desired it; and, on the surgeon pointing to the altered physi-

[1] Private Whelan was subsequently promoted to Corporal, and received the medal for distinguished conduct. We hope that Mr Jurgessen was likewise rewarded.

cal aspect and haggard worn appearance presented by the men, evidencing how rapidly their health and constitutions were suffering from the scant supply of water, combined with heavy fatigues and night work, it was deemed necessary to discontinue labour on the works as much as possible during the heat of the day. The issue of beer did not, though, answer expectation, and experience showed it to have little effect in quenching real thirst, most of the men desiring to procure water instead. Evening after evening tantalising masses of dark cloud would appear, and heavy rain often be seen descending on the adjoining hills. Then every utensil would be got ready to receive the much-needed supply—a sapper was wounded while thus engaged placing barrels; but time after time only disappointment ensued, and the drought at the fort continued. By the 4th February the original well had been deepened to 40 feet, but only 15 gallons flowed in during the night; and the second well, then sunk to 25 feet, still gave no result. On the afternoon of the 6th a gentle shower fell, long enough to enable each man to obtain a slight quantity of water; and on the two following days the ration was increased to two pints, 28 and 23 gallons each respective day having run into the well—now 45 feet deep. This better supply was observed to cause an immediate improvement in the appearance and spirits of the men. Finally, to the intense relief of all, a heavy downpour of rain came on about noon on the 8th, continuing for some hours, and, while furnishing a store of water sufficing for the imme-

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diate wants of the garrison, caused a better supply from the well.

After dusk, on the 23d January, the enemy surrounded the fort, and then poured in the hottest musketry-fire yet experienced, their cannon also reopening. This attack was replied to by sweeping volleys from the garrison, which, it was believed, had —together with the daring act repeated by Mr Parsons, who again stole out towards one of the enemy's positions, and exploded a hand-grenade in their midst —the effect of checking an intended rush to capture the place. At daybreak the attack was resumed by an equally heavy fire, and kept up the whole day. Ninety-two cannon-shots were fired. The artillery-fire was continued on the 25th and 26th, but only accompanied with occasional shots from rifles. On the former day, forty-two cannon-shots were counted; and one of them, which had crashed through two huts, on being examined, proved to be a rudely constructed shell which had failed to explode.

Fresh daring act by Mr Parsons.

Whenever the enemy's fire abated, the opportunity was seized to effect repairs and strengthen the defences. The parapet wall — now five feet thick — resisted the cannon-shot, but many of the huts were much damaged, the walls being pierced through and through, and the roofs riddled. Still, none had yet fallen. The two end huts were strengthened by the addition of earthen walls, two feet thick — replaced later by stone — on the inner sides of the outer ones; and props were placed under the roofs to sup-

Additional defences made.

port them, in case the walls should give way. A supply of sand-bags — industriously made by Mrs Long and some of the hospital patients—was kept in readiness to repair breaches.

The 27th and remaining days of January were tolerably quiet, and nothing particular occurred until the 1st February, when it was discovered that the enemy had succeeded in constructing a position for their cannon among the ruins of the old Dutch laager, only about 150 yards from the south end of the huts. A steady rifle-fire was kept up from the fort, but the Boers, as was their practice throughout the siege, kept well under cover in the day—at night they evidently crept out occasionally to the open, as fire came from directions offering no cover.

An extemporised gun.

Through the ingenuity of the men of the Army Service Corps, a small cannon was constructed out of the monkey of an Abyssinian pump, throwing a cylindrical ball, weighing 2 lb. 6 oz., made from round crowbar iron cased in lead. Brought into action amidst much excitement, on the 1st February, it was found to fire remarkably well. As quickly as ammunition could be manufactured, this extemporised gun continued to play on the houses and positions held by the enemy, from which they kept up a fire.

Boer gun in a fresh position.

The enemy having got a gun into their new work, recommenced cannonading the fort on the 2d, the huts suffering considerably, and many hair-breadth escapes occurring to the garrison. The embrasure of the gun, when not firing, was screened by a two-inch

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iron target, which appeared to be worked on hinges. A watch was kept in the fort, and a volley poured into the opening the instant the gun was run out, with such good effect that the enemy experienced much difficulty, and could only fire at long intervals.

Union-jack made.

A ship's ensign, which the garrison had been flying over the fort since the commencement of hostilities, had by this become so damaged by wind and bullets, that it was determined to provide a substitute and make a real Union-jack. A Geneva flag being available, and Mrs Long contributing a blue serge dress, the flag was soon made to assume the required pattern, and was hoisted amid great acclamation.

Quieter days.

The enemy's fire during the greater part of February was neither so severe nor continuous as previously, and from the 10th to the 13th all was so quiet as to lead to the impression that the main body had left; but, later, although little firing took place by day, occasional volleys were poured into the fort by night. Sundays were usually very quiet. The rifle ammunition used by the Boers was found to be largely of the Martini-Henry pattern, evidently from the stores captured at Bronkhorst Spruit.

Zigzag trench made towards Boer position.

On the 8th, as the Boers were busily engaged in making a nearer approach by throwing up a shelter trench across the old Dutch laager ruins, it was determined to endeavour again to push forward the abandoned zigzag sap, and so perhaps get near enough to damage this work by exploding a mine. The trench was steadily carried on, and by the 24th, a mine,

charged with 35 lb. gun-cotton, at 60 yards' distance from the fort, was in readiness to be exploded.

Reduction of ration.

On the 20th it was deemed prudent to effect a reduction in the scale of rations in the event of the siege being much further prolonged; and, on the 24th, an effort was made to acquaint the general officer at Newcastle of the condition of the garrison, two of the natives having offered to carry a despatch by way of Swaziland. Both were, however,—as was learnt afterwards,—stopped by Boers on the border, and prevented going further.

Messengers sent to Newcastle.

Fall of a hut.

At the beginning of March the outer walls of the end huts, facing the nearer enemy's gun, became so riddled from round-shot as to threaten complete collapse to the buildings, notwithstanding the efforts made to strengthen them by the erection of inner walls and props to the roofs. One of these huts, which at the commencement of the siege had served as a hospital, and since as officers' quarters, was in process of being evacuated and baggage removed, when the walls gave way and fell in, smashing the crockery and other articles there had not been time to get out, Mrs Long herself barely escaping through the open door.

Boer gun again moved.

On the 3d March, the enemy removed their gun from the old Dutch laager to a fresh position, constructed on the crest of the hill near the river, about 400 yards from the fort.

Fresh element of danger: huts fired.

On the following day a fresh element of danger to the garrison cropped up, through the enemy setting fire to the thatched roofs of the huts by means of

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Greek fire, enclosed in pointed metallic tubes perforated with holes, sent, apparently, attached to the points of arrows. The tarpaulins, which had originally been spread over the roofs, had been damaged and cut away by the enemy's shot. The commissariat hut was the first to suffer, and it took two hours of strenuous exertion—a good supply of water being fortunately forthcoming at this period—to get the fire under, and at the same time save the commissariat supplies. Civilian Conductor Charles Jurgessen and Volunteer Stewart were conspicuous in exposing themselves, mounted on a platform throwing buckets of water on the burning roof. Another hut, similarly fired, was saved by the coolness of Private W. Lee, who crawled along outside the roof, and plucked out the burning rocket from the thatch. As the thatched roofs could no longer be efficiently protected, it was determined to remove them. The rafters were accordingly cut through, and the roofs allowed to fall into the interior of the huts. Sergeant Day and Sapper O'Leary were mentioned as having distinguished themselves in this exposed dangerous duty under fire.

The enemy evidently expected great results from setting the huts on fire. As soon as smoke was seen issuing from the commissariat hut, they showed themselves in strength—estimated at 700 men—and mounted parties were observed posted on the hills around, as if intended to cut off any attempt to escape. A rapid artillery and rifle fire was kept up, the latter lasting four and the former seven hours. Through

it all the garrison coolly and steadily worked on, being able to spare, during the first three hours of its continuance, only eighteen men to act as sentries and respond to the attack. Volunteer Stewart was killed, and another man severely wounded. The former was the fifth and last death which occurred during the siege, though several men were badly wounded from time to time.

Excellent service performed by some men.

The wire attached to the mine by the old officers' mess-building having become covered with *débris* and overgrown with grass, Conductor Parsons and Volunteer Holmes remained outside the fort, on the night of the 4th, for upwards of an hour, clearing it, while the enemy's rifle-fire continued. They, it was afterwards found, had managed to take up this *fougasse* without damage to themselves. Sergeant Day and Sapper Church, R.E., and Corporal Crothers and Private Joy, 94th Regiment, also performed good service about this time, in proceeding to blow up a sanitary trench, used by the garrison, 50 yards outside, but which had become a source of danger, some of the enemy in the last attack having occupied it.

From the 5th to the 9th was a quiet time, during which the thatch was removed from inside the huts, and burnt in the outside ditch. Heavy rains fell and caused much discomfort, but some amount of shelter was obtained with old tarpaulins and tents.

News from outside.

On the morning of the 10th, two men, bearing a flag of truce, appeared before the fort with a letter for the commandant from Mr Alfred Aylward, lately

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editor of the 'Natal Witness,' but who had recently joined the Boer side. This gave a tolerably fair *résumé*, as was afterwards ascertained, of the successes achieved by the Boers; pointed out that no relief could be forthcoming; and, on the part of Commandant-General Joubert, offered favourable terms for capitulation. An answer was requested within three hours, though it was left open to Lieutenant Long to arrange for an interview or short armistice with the Boer commandant. Accompanied by Dr Falvey and the Rev. Father Walsh, Mr Long then went to meet Assistant Commandant-General Steyn and Mr Aylward in the town. The latter took the lead in conversation, enlarged upon the effect of the reverses experienced by Sir George Colley, and pressed upon Mr Long the necessity of surrender, no hope of relief remaining, and further resistance being futile. A truce of twenty-four hours was agreed upon. The following morning the two men reappeared with the white flag, and accompanied by Mr Aylward, to whom Mr Long then handed his written reply, to the effect that his orders from the Colonel commanding the Transvaal were to hold the fort; and, until he received contrary instructions, he must continue to do so. The white flags were soon after taken down, and firing on both sides resumed.

Enemy offers terms for capitulation.

The fort ordered to be held to the last.

Illness, and the effects of a slight splinter-wound, compelled Lieutenant Long to give over the command of the fort to Surgeon Falvey from the 12th to the 15th. During this period an inner fortified position was constructed for the garrison to retire upon,

in the event of their being driven back from the outer line, the stones from the walls of the two end huts being utilised for this purpose.

News of the armistice, but hostilities still continued.

The firing now became slack by day, but brisker by night. On the 23d the Boer commandant sent in, under a flag of truce, a 'Natal Mercury' of the 8th, containing an account of Sir George Colley's final defeat and death, and the terms of the armistice subsequently entered into, the latter being, apparently, the first intimation the garrison had of the matter. Two days later, the Boer commandant notified that the said armistice had been extended for three days. As, until the arrival of the provision-waggons, the agreement had no effect at the outlying stations, hostilities continued as previously.

On the evening of the 29th, and lasting until midnight, the enemy poured in a heavy artillery and rifle fire; and during these last days several *fougasses* were laid and exploded by the garrison from the end of their zigzag trench. Charged with 30 lb. of gun-cotton, and fired by means of a slow match, these mines sent the ton or so of stones laid over them flying into the air and into the Boer position behind the laager, and—as transpired afterwards—by nearly smothering two Boer miners engaged in tunnelling towards the fort, had the effect of arresting their work for a time.

Peace notified.

About mid-day on the 30th hostilities ceased, the Boer commandant having reported to Mr Long that articles of peace had been signed; and shortly afterwards Lieutenant Baker, of the 3d Battalion 60th

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Rifles, arrived with despatches in confirmation. The siege was over, after having lasted eighty-four days—a remarkable defence—reflecting great honour on the brave, indomitable little garrison.[1]

[1] Colonel Bellairs, on receiving Lieutenant Long's detailed report of the siege, issued, on the 15th April, an order giving the highest praise to the garrison "for the successful and heroic defence made for so long a period against a determined foe, many times their number, and under circumstances of great privation and difficulty." How deplorable was it that many of the men who had thus so brilliantly distinguished themselves, should, soon after hostilities were over, have tarnished their hardly earned fame by breaking away from all control, and evincing such a spirit of insubordination as to necessitate the relief of the detachment, and numerous trials by courts-martial!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEFENCE OF STANDERTON.[1]

The village—for in appearance it is nothing more—consists of only some fifty ground-floor buildings, mostly constructed of stone, with corrugated iron roofs, but some wholly of iron, scattered over a space of less than half a square mile. The general absence of trees, fruit-gardens, and hedges gives a bare appearance, unlike other little towns of the Transvaal. Lying on the slope of the plain to the north, it is overlooked by higher ground and rocky knolls rising up north and east. The Heidelberg-Newcastle road passes through, crossing the Vaal below to the south by Stander's Drift. Both town and drift derive their names from "General" Stander, who had a neighbouring farm lying under a high hill also called after him. This gentleman fought against us at Boem Plaats nearly thirty years before, but had, since the annex-

[1] The story of "The Defence of Standerton" is very pleasantly told in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for July and August 1881. The account we give is mainly taken from that source.

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ation of the Transvaal, been content to sit as member —Crown nominee with allowances—of the Legislative Assembly. The river here is broad and rapid, often impassable for days and even weeks during this—the rainy—season. Winding and flowing east to west, it formed a natural protection to the military camp and position in that direction.

Military position.

The fort and camp lay about a mile to the south-west of the town on rising ground, with Stander's Kop—one of the lofty flat-topped hills so commonly met with in South Africa, forming landmarks for miles round—a mile and a quarter to its north-west. The fort was an earthwork, with ditch around and some commissariat sheds inside; and the camp included sundry stone huts, some unfinished. The garrison was composed of three companies of the 94th and one of the 58th Regiment, with a few sappers and men belonging to the Commissariat and Hospital Corps—about 350 regulars. Three of the companies, under Captain Froom, had only reached the place on the 21st December, as has been already related, under circumstances of considerable risk from attack on the march at a disadvantage.

Defences.

Three days later Major Montague of the 94th Regiment, who had been sent from Pietermaritzburg to take over the command, was able, after running risk of capture *en route*, to get into the place. During this interval the Court-house, containing the Landdrost's offices and jail, being central and the most substantial building, was adapted as a post of defence; the hotel and another house similarly, all be-

ing occupied by military—a company under Captain Campion. The townspeople at this time raised 13 mounted and 21 foot volunteers for the defence of the town.[1] These men were armed by Captain Froom, and formed the nucleus of a body of volunteers—afterwards numbering 75 men—which performed excellent service.

Telegraph destroyed.

The telegraph was still working at intervals to Natal up to the 24th, but the following day the wire was found cut in numerous places and the poles thrown down. Later on the Boers were seen in the distance removing the poles on a waggon; but they were left standing to within 1200 yards of the outposts on the north—though across the river, where they could be got at with greater impunity, they were removed much nearer.

Christmas Eve.

On the 24th a meeting of the inhabitants was held, when the Landdrost—who appears to have given ready assistance at all times—read out the last telegram received from Sir George Colley, which stated that relief would reach the place on the 20th January; and Major Montague called upon the people to furnish more volunteers, to choose their own officers, when he would arm and drill them.

Refuge for women and children.

A large wool-store, with its windows and doors blocked up, was handed over to shelter the women—about a score—and children at night, and placed in charge of the clergyman. After a short trial, though, the "Flea Laager," as it was called, was abandoned—home, even with the risk of a chance bullet, being

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2783) of January 1881, p. 82.

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thought preferable to safety in the midst of an unpleasant "mixed" population. The enemy's shots were, however, fired at the forts; and the town, although within range from across the river, escaped.

False alarm.

On Christmas Eve, after dark, some boys letting off crackers in the town, in honour of the day, created an alarm in the camp that the Boers were upon them. It served the purpose, however, of showing that the troops knew their places at the loopholes in case a real attack took place.

Christmas Day.

How Christmas Day came to be spent, is thus graphically told in Lieutenant-Colonel Montague's narrative:—

"That day came on one of the thunderstorms of the country, bad enough in peace time; now, with the Boer scouts riding about outside, and all the buzz of preparation going on within, peculiarly awful. First increasing darkness till the tents were scarcely visible, and the men had to strike off work; then a flash, and a roll of thunder coming nearer; a second flash more blinding than before, followed at a shorter interval by a louder roll, the air still as death: we remained in great expectancy,—no breath, no sound, except the crashes, culminating in one that shook one's very frame, and made us turn round involuntarily to see which of us were hit. Close by two horses lay stone-dead, without a mark upon them; a man near the tent we sat in, stretched out, fortunately only stunned; and a corporal inside the tent beside him grinning, half in terror and a little bit in sheer amusement, with a big hole burnt in his coat-sleeve, still smoking. We were lucky to escape so easily. The strange thing in these storms is that they always wind up with one big crash. After that

the thunder rolls and rumbles quietly away, as if in a hurry to be off after doing the worst it can do.

"As we sat round our poor table that evening, getting through a repetition of yesterday's dinner, we talked of home a bit, and of the merry evenings that our friends were passing that Christmas night; yet, as we came to know afterwards, they were not so merry in many homes, the telegram telling our sad news having arrived that same Christmas Day. Then we did not know that; and we munched our tough beef, and washed it down with the champagne left from yesterday's present, and thought of them at home, and wished that we were with them."

Martial law declared.

Christmas passed. It was found that volunteers came in but slowly, many making excuses for not joining. Pressure became necessary. Other circumstances, too, showed that the civil population required a firmer hand than that of the Landdrost. It was necessary that the officer commanding should exercise the supreme authority over all on the spot. Another meeting of the townspeople was therefore called, and Major Montague declared martial law to be in force.

All hands then went to work with a will in strengthening the defences in camp and town, storing water and provisions, and bringing all around into order. Reports kept coming in of Boer assemblies, and their projected attacks; but nothing came of them until the 29th December, when, some hundred of Boers being said to have collected in a valley three miles away, the mounted men — a serviceable little body about twenty-five strong, only just formed, but which were afterwards increased to twice that number—were sent

First skirmish.

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across the Vaal to reconnoitre under their leader, Conductor Cassell, a fine soldier, formerly a sergeant-major in the 16th Lancers.[1] Throwing out scouts in advance and to the flanks, the party moved along the Newcastle road until, looking from the camp, they appeared mere dots against the green veld. Then suddenly, out of a declivity to their left rear, emerged a mass of horsemen, galloping, as it seemed, towards the river; but, catching sight of the man—Volunteer Hall—scouting to the left, they made for him, he galloping, waving his carbine, and shouting—faintly heard from the camp—to warn his party. Then, for the next ten minutes, ensued a race for life, the Boers, though nearer to the river, firing meanwhile, losing ground, until only a few of the better mounted showed to the front. At this juncture, some infantry having been placed on a kopje which commanded the drift and the ground beyond for half a mile, caused the leading Boers, on coming within range, to hang back, when our mounted men were enabled to get in—though with the loss of five men left on the ground—one of them being the gallant fellow who had first warned his comrades of their danger. His body was found, after the siege, in a shallow grave on the hillside, and, being brought in, was reburied with military honours in the little cemetery below the camp, where half-a-dozen mounds mark the resting-places of others.

Two wounded men lay by the drift for some time, feebly crying for help before any could be rendered, the Boers—several hundreds of them—having dis-

[1] See *ante*, p. 96.

mounted, and from a ridge, about 700 yards distant, kept up a heavy fire for about an hour, replied to by our men, who took up positions under cover along the river-front by the fort.

Boer positions.

By the end of December Standerton would appear to have been completely invested,—a stone laager having been formed behind a kopje across the river to the south; another similarly placed to the north of the town; Stander's Kop, occupied by day, received its garrison from a laager to the west; and other laagers were located higher up the river. Boer patrols and scouts encircled the place. Their force was commanded by Commandant Lombaard.

The camp was much exposed to long-range rifle-fire from across the river, and from a kopje south of Stander's Kop; sharpshooters had frequently to be employed to keep it down. In order to give the impression that the enemy's fire was not felt, the tents were left standing outside the fort, but the men were ordered not to use them—an order not strictly obeyed until two men had been severely wounded while sitting under the canvas. The officers' tents, placed further down, gained some protection from the fort, and were used for washing and dressing in of a morning; but precautions, by making traverses with boxes inside, had to be taken, though even then the inmates were not always safe, as both tents and clothing therein showed many bullet-holes. Officers and men slept in the fort, the former in a shed, which also served them for their meals.

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Hospital arrangements.

The military hospital was a stone building below the fort, fairly protected from fire. The Dutch church in the town—a spacious stone edifice—was also utilised for the wounded, and was capable of holding thirty beds.

Many of the houses in the town having been, at the commencement, deserted by their owners, who left in a hurry for the Orange Free State or elsewhere, difficulty was experienced in checking robberies by soldiers and others. Corporal punishment had to be resorted to.

First sortie.

The fire from Stander's Kop proving annoying, Major Montague was desirous of making an attempt to surprise the Boer picket, which usually occupied that height by day, and which was, at that time, supposed to sleep by night at Stander's farmhouse at the foot of the hill, about a mile from the fort. Accordingly, at three o'clock on the morning of the 4th January, sending thirty mounted men round to ascend the hill on its other side and cut off any Boers attempting to reach the top, Major Montague proceeded with thirty volunteers from the 94th Regiment, under cover of a fairly dark morning, to line, in extended order, a wall about a hundred yards from the farmhouse. All was still, no sign of a sentry, and the party only awaited the appearance of the mounted men on the top of the hill—another hundred yards beyond the house—to make an advanced movement, when the sound of galloping horses to their right rear told of the retreat of the

mounted men, one of them soon coming up to explain that a large body of the enemy had been seen coming on, behind the hill.

Thereupon Major Montague felt the necessity of falling back as well, but had not gone far when, morning having broken, a crowd of Boers were seen to the left of Stander's Kop, only about 200 yards off. The infantry opened fire, and the Boers —halting here and there to dismount and reply— galloped to a rise about 400 yards away, where there was good cover behind ruined kraals, from whence they kept up the attack. In ten minutes more a company of the 58th Regiment arrived as a support on the right, when the enemy's fire slackened, and they gradually withdrew. Thus ended, without casualty to the garrison, what may be termed its first sortie.

Gallant conduct of natives.

On the morning of the 7th January, it was discovered that the enemy, during the night, had commenced an earthwork large enough to shelter fifty men, on the high ground across the river, 900 yards from and threatening the town, as well as the ground between it and the fort. Two sides of the camp were already exposed, and this work would command a third. An endeavour was made to provide against this contingency by erecting traverses. But soon— the same afternoon—a couple of plucky natives were instrumental in extricating the garrison from the difficulty. It was proposed to destroy a hut—Scheeper's shanty—which stood between this Boer trench

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and the river, and which, if occupied by the enemy, might occasion great inconvenience. Some Kafir prisoners, who had volunteered for the hazardous work, were furnished by the Landdrost. Crossing the Vaal, these men quickly pulled down and burnt the hut. Then, finding no notice taken of their doings from the new trench above, one of the party—a Swazie, undergoing a sentence of penal servitude for homicide—gun in hand, stole up to the work, followed by another native. Finding it empty, they seized some tools found inside, and succeeded in levelling it before the Boers became aware of what was being done. Too late some appeared on the scene and sent some shots after the men, the Swazie returning the fire, as they fell back triumphantly, amid the cheers of our men, with the Boer spades they had been working with. A subscription was got up for these two brave fellows by the townspeople, and it may be hoped that they afterwards had the rest of their terms of imprisonment remitted, and were able to rejoin their tribes. Had their deed been performed by soldiers, the Victoria Cross would have rewarded their action.

It being thought that the enemy might attempt to throw up the work again under cover of darkness, a couple of rifles, placed on rests for the exact range, were fired at intervals through the night, with the effect that no fresh operations were undertaken. It afterwards transpired that the work was intended for two guns expected from the Free State, but which never came.

With the view of deceiving the Boers into the be-

lief that the garrison possessed artillery, a dummy gun mounted on waggon-wheels was constructed, and being occasionally run out and sundry evolutions performed with it, the desired effect is said to have been produced.

Another work erected.

The fire from Stander's Kop continuing troublesome, and a man having been shot from thence, a rifle-pit, to act against that position, was commenced on the night of the 8th January. This, bit by bit, grew into a formidable outwork, provisioned for and garrisoned by fifteen men. It could only be relieved in the dark, on account of being so exposed to fire. Often the rains caused it to be knee-deep in water, no drainage being possible; yet, notwithstanding, the men never grumbled at such continued discomfort. When, owing to wet, a piece of the parapet—no larger than a tea-tray—fell, towards the close of the investment, no less than 300 bullets were picked out of it, showing what the fire had been.

Some days later a heliograph was constructed, by means of looking-glasses purchased in the town, and flashes were directed on Paarde Kop, a hill thirty miles on the road to Newcastle, in the delusive hope that Sir George Colley might be approaching, and would be able to reply. But two months were yet to elapse before anything was heard from that direction.

Supplies.

As it was confidently anticipated that Sir George Colley would arrive with a relief column in a few weeks, the supplies to hand were deemed sufficient,

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and no anxiety seems to have been entertained at first on that account. Cattle were plentiful, biscuits ample for present wants, and a good supply of lime-juice made the garrison independent of vegetables. The town, too, appeared fairly stocked, although Major Montague is found incidentally remarking:—

"The Dutch had lately made a practice of taking away flour to a large extent. Gunpowder had entirely gone the same way, one storekeeper having sold six barrels within a few months, while another gave 1000 rounds of Westley-Richards cartridges to a Boer, the leader of one of the attacks upon Standerton, and avowedly disaffected, that being the quantity he was allowed to purchase each year, the Landdrost giving him the 'permit' within a few days of the proclamation of the Republic. So well were matters managed by the Government at Pretoria."

The end of January came, and with it—as the expected relief column had not been heard of—greater anxiety as to the sufficiency of the supplies. The garrison had their food regularly meted out to them, but with the civilians it was otherwise, and it was feared that waste and extravagance were prevalent. Thereupon Major Montague determined to seize all provisions stored in the town, and place them under the care of the Landdrost for regularity of issue. The stores were gone through, and supplies carted away. Families were required to give up their private stocks, and enter their names on the ration list, or else certify that they could last for a time without help. The scale for rations—soldiers and civilians—

Reduction of rations.

was reduced; small quantities of bread and biscuit were issued to the former, but bread only twice a-week. Women received eight ounces of meal or sago,—afterwards further reduced one-half,—while the children seemed to have fared still worse.

Commandant-General Joubert's arrival.

A group of horsemen, the leading man evidently one in authority, were seen making observations on the top of Stander's Kop for some hours on the 17th January, as if devising some plan for attacking. It was afterwards known that the leader was Joubert, the Commandant-General, and that the idea was to place a gun on the hill, strengthen the investing force, and then endeavour to take the place. Boer reinforcements were, however, soon urgently required for Laing's Nek, so the projected attack came to nothing.

A "scare."

The kopje above the town and graveyard, to the east, the key to the position, was originally held by a mixed force of soldiers and volunteers; but one afternoon a panic—with whom originating was not clear—seized the party, who, evacuating the position, nearly caused the loss of the town. The arrangement was then put a stop to, and the troops and volunteers occupied, and were held responsible for, their own respective positions.

The picket in charge of the kopje would seem to have been under fire from about 150 Boers, who had taken cover on a rocky kopje about 1000 yards to the front. All at once our men were seen running back by twos and threes, making for the town. Fortunately

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the Boers must have suspected some trap, as they delayed coming on to secure the advantage open to them. The officer commanding in the town, seeing what was taking place, thus had time to get out reinforcements, and run them up the hill to continue the defence before the Boers had advanced.

Arrival of a Zulu messenger.

Allusion has already been made in a former chapter to the one Zulu, of several native messengers sent from Pretoria, who succeeded in evading the Boer patrols and penetrating the English lines. The arrival of this fine fellow at Standerton, and his subsequent departure for Natal, is one of the prettiest bits of Major Montague's well-told tale, and will not admit of condensation :—

"He, the volunteer, had been out on vedette at daybreak, and had seen a native in the distance coming towards him, 'when,' he added with a heroic air, 'I made for him at once, sir, and captured him, and brought him in. He says he wants to see you and no one else.'

"A black youth, with a pleasant face, shivering with cold and wet, here peeped in with the usual *koss*, accompanied by the arm raised, and began to laugh as all natives, Zulus more than others, do when they wish to be serious.

"'Well, Johnnie; what do you want?'

"'Me want general, sare; you general, sare?'

"'He says he wants to see the Commandant, sir,' slid in the grizzly one.

"'Yes, that's me; now what is it?'

"'He won't tell you, sir; he says he wants to see you alone.'

"'Well, we are alone; go on.'

"'No, sare, oder gentlemans here,' said the Zulu, pointing

to my friends the doctor and one of the captains, who were sitting upon their stretchers on either side of me.

"'They are nothing—they are only friends; go on.'

"'No, sare; see you by self, not here if you please, sare.'

"'He says he must see you quite alone, sir,' echoed the escort. So I had to get up and go into the office-tent, into which followed the Zulu, also the volunteer. The pair then with much secrecy pulled the curtain down, hooked up the sides, and closed the door. We only wanted the 'Conspirators' Chorus' to make the scene perfect.

"The Zulu had a small bundle of clothes over his shoulder, supported by a stick run through the knot; this he took down, and pulling out the stick, offered it to me.

"'Yes, all right; but where is the letter, if that is what you have brought?' I asked.

"He replied by tapping the stick, still holding it out to me.

"'He means it's in the stick, sir. Here, Johnnie, where is it, this end or that?' continued the volunteer, pulling out his clasp-knife and cutting away at one end.

"And so it turned out. The stick had been hollowed out, and a small roll of paper inserted, the hole being filled with a plug, when it was quite impossible to detect that it had been tampered with. The roll of paper contained a despatch from Pretoria, photographs of general orders, and a map of the road, all microscopic, and containing in a space smaller than a child's little finger a whole budget of news. It was addressed to Sir George Colley, commanding the troops at Standerton, where it was fully believed that he would be by the time the stick arrived. It was, as we learned long after, the day of Laing's Nek, when he tried so well to redeem his word and to be with us.

"The secret of the Zulu being given up, he went outside, and at once became the centre of an admiring crowd of soldiers, to whom his adventures were like a page from the 'Arabian Nights' after their newsless life. He was the hero of the hour. One man gave him a pair of trousers, another a

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coat, and a third an old wideawake, which was immediately adorned with a tuft of black ostrich-feathers, from under which his face peered out with an air of self-complacency most amusing. . . .

"The Zulu promised to go on again after a day's rest: so a fresh stick was got ready, another despatch added, and himself provided with some money and food, and allowed to strut about as the hero of the hour—a *rôle* he played to perfection. . . .

"Our Zulu meantime found he had fallen on such pleasant times that he thought he should like to stay permanently with us, and it wanted some pressure to induce him to go on. I think he saw that his popularity was on the wane, and so at last consented. A second native volunteered to go with him. He got a big-coat, money, *scoff*—that is, food for the journey—his precious stick—and, after much delay, at last started. To conclude his history at once: Three days later he returned, crest-fallen, wet, and draggled—he had lain out in the open six miles away, within a few yards of the Dutch; the country was infested by them; patrols and sentries were everywhere; it was impossible to get through. He expected to return, as before, a hero. But we were all disgusted at being sold, and he was unnoticed—the men no longer asked him for his adventures; two Hottentot women at the waggons were said to have spat at him in scorn. He was broken-hearted, and came humbly enough after a day of it to ask to be allowed to try again. On this being granted, he made a fresh plan, got put across the river with his friend on a horse, and made off.

"It turned out that they were soon made prisoners by some Kafirs, and brought back to the Dutch laager just across the river, where he was kept for five days, being armed with an assegai with which he promised to kill the English if they attacked. One night, I remember, we did return their fire rather sharply—we knocked over nine of them; another, every Dutchman, seized with panic, bolted out of the laager, thinking that we had got dynamite in by some mysterious dodge. At last, by the most artful lies, he so imposed on the poor

simple Dutch that they gave him a pass to the Free State, for which he set out, taking with him the precious stick, and getting through all right. In my despatch I asked Sir George Colley if he could reward the brave fellow with ten cows, and he actually received thirty pounds, the value of the cows. The Zulu subsequently turned up as servant to the correspondent of the 'Standard,' and on arriving at Standerton made straight for me, once more a hero."

Escape from disaster.

The position of a laager up the river had been reconnoitred on the 28th January; and as only eight waggons were seen, and the ground about appeared favourable, Major Montague thought of attacking it, but the more than ordinary activity of the enemy on Stander's Kop induced him to put off the plan for a day. As he says: "And it was a piece of luck that I did, for that morning my scouts brought in word that this laager was on the move—forty-nine waggons, with 200 men,—so well do the laagers conceal their positions, and the force holding them. I should have gone with eighty men to attack a position I expected was held by sixty at the outside, and should have met my match, perhaps a bit more."

The Zulu messenger, when he came in, also gave intelligence of having been a prisoner the three previous days with a Boer laager from Potchefstroom, then twenty miles off, and moving, as he declared, to attack Standerton. It consisted of 160 waggons, which, at seven men each—the usual average—gave 1100 men.

This alarm caused the garrison renewed energy, and

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More works erected.

all day and night they toiled in erecting new works, —two on kopjes to the north, about half a mile from the town and the same distance apart; another on the kopje to the east, above the graveyard; and a fourth in front of the fort, to assist the one already constructed on its right. An officer and twenty men occupied each of the new works. Thus the town was now protected on all sides—on two by a line of small forts, while the main work and river covered the other two sides.

After all, though, the expected attack did not come off; but the waggons crossed the Vaal higher up, and passed on towards Laing's Nek. The place had, however, thus been rendered much more secure.

A native shot.

There appear to have been over 300 male natives, who, it may be presumed, were employed in various ways about the place. Four of these men had been in custody for some time on suspicion of having been concerned in the murder of a half-caste at the commencement of hostilities. One day they managed to escape, pursued by the native guard. Three got away to the Boers on Stander's Kop; but the fourth received an assegai wound in the leg, and was brought back. For this act the unfortunate man was ordered to be shot. We pass over the account of the disagreeable ceremony attending his death.

Second sortie.

The second sortie—an ambush to surprise the enemy —was apparently carried out on the 7th February. The Boer patrols, from their main laager—two miles

out in the Heidelberg direction—had acquired a habit of creeping through the long grass in the early morning to within a few hundred yards of our vedettes. In this way a horse was lost, though its rider came in unharmed. Such tactics being likely to render the men unsteady, a counter-plan was thought of—the mounted men to make a feint of attacking a rocky position which the enemy had fortified with sconces about a mile to the right, in the hope of drawing the Boers from the main laager to their assistance across the front of an infantry party concealed in the dip of the valley between.

To carry this out, Major Montague left the place with about seventy men at three o'clock on a dark morning—a cold drizzling rain soon coming on. So dark does it appear to have been, that the party moved past one of the small forts on their left—not a hundred yards distant—without being seen by two sentries on the look-out for them. They followed the road leading to the laager until warned by a rope, which had been placed across the previous day, to turn off in extended order for 300 yards to the right. This movement had been, as was thought, most carefully executed; and the men were about to lie down in the grass, when one of the officers discovered the outline of Stander's Kop showing to their front instead of their rear, as it should have done had they been facing the right way—thus illustrating the difficulty of making night movements when even the stars afford no guidance.

Facing about, the party lay hidden in the long

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grass. The rain had ceased; dawn came, bringing with it a cold wind, and making all feel colder still. A thousand yards away to their right front was the laager, with a house behind it. The sun had risen, and yet there was no sign given of the mounted men attacking. At length shots, soon followed by volleys and answering volleys on the right, told of their presence. At once figures were seen running up the hill over the laager to discover what was going on, while others were securing their horses out grazing and saddling up. Soon a few came on, by threes and fours, towards the right flank of the party in ambush —stopping short, however, and dismounting under the rise, when they could be heard saying in Dutch: "Wait here, and we shall catch them." The fire on the right continuing, they remounted and moved off in its direction.

Attention had hitherto been diverted to these men, when suddenly a big Boer—afterwards known as Mr Otto—was seen moving slowly along the front of the ambush party, with another well-known leader—Mr Cronjé—beyond on a grey horse, followed by fifty men. In another moment the party would have been discovered, so, rising, Major Montague gave the order to fire. The Dutchman, bending over his horse's neck, rode off untouched. The men, cold and numbed, fired wildly at first, but more steadily afterwards at the man on the grey horse and the rest. Horses were galloping away without riders, and the remainder dashed forward for cover, and were soon firing from thence, about a hundred yards off.

As more reinforcements appeared to be approaching, Major Montague now deemed it prudent to fall back. The retirement was effected in regular order, skirmishing and firing, with but one wounded man—the only casualty. The Boers are said to have afterwards admitted that eleven of their men had been knocked over. By the time the affair was ended, several hundred horsemen had shown on the hill just vacated, thus exhibiting the enemy's excellent organisation for quickly reinforcing a post attacked.

The skirmish had a good effect on the Boers—caused them to leave our vedettes alone, and "mistrust every patch of grass that grew."

Curious enterprise.

A notable enterprise was one carried out by a colour-sergeant, who, after long abstinence from liquor, spent an evening, indulging in several glasses, at the canteen, where a commissariat man, saying that he could take Stander's Kop with ten men, the sergeant, not to be outdone, declared he would do so with only five. He accordingly returned to his hut, called for five volunteers, and started with them for the top of Stander's Kop. About two hours afterwards a man came back from him saying that he was close to the top and required reinforcements. A party under an officer was sent out to bring him back, but returned at daylight without having been able to find him. In the meantime the sergeant and his men had occupied the sconce at the near end of the hill, overlooking the camp—the post of the Boer picket by day—and remained hidden until the next

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morning, when twenty Boers appearing, they were, greatly to their surprise, received with volleys, three being knocked over, and the remainder quickly disappearing.

The difficulty now was to draw off these men and prevent their capture. All the troops were set in motion, skirmishing towards the Kop. Fifty Boers were seen riding along the top, and a similar party spread out at the base. Both sides opened fire, the sergeant's party meanwhile scrambling down the rocks, and, protected by our heavy fire, managing to gain the garden-wall below—already referred to—when the skirmishers were able to rescue them.

The last shot.

The last shot—an unfortunate one as it turned out—fired during the investment, was on the 11th March. Waggons were seen approaching from the Newcastle direction, and the Boers began to show themselves on their different positions. It looked as if a fresh laager was about to be formed. The sergeant in charge of the sharpshooters at the fort was directed to fire a shot, which he did with effect.

Scarcely had the man fallen, when two Boers rode towards the drift carrying a large white flag. The river being at the time too high to be forded, a native was sent across swimming, who brought back a letter from the Boer commandant, enclosing a copy of the armistice agreement, and a private note from the officer in charge of the supplies forwarded.

Armistice notified,

but the possibility of peace

The consternation was great. The possibility of the negotiations resulting in peace does not seem to

have been entertained, and the commanding officer issued orders which pointed to the prolongation of the war :—

being made not entertained.

"The reinforcements are now on their way from England, and a further column is at Newcastle; but as the final advance may not take place until the arrival of the reinforcements, it will be safer not to anticipate any relief until the end of April at the earliest. Up to that date supplies on the present scale have been calculated; our forts are completed; ammunition is ample; and the health of the garrison and town is excellent."

Nevertheless, peace *was* made; and the notification thereof being received on the 26th March, the volunteers were disbanded; the troops withdrawn to the camp; the Boers admitted into the town; and the Landdrost reinstated to carry out the civil law as before.

Thus was brought to a conclusion a uniformly well-sustained resistance, carried out with small loss —only five men killed—two privates of the 58th and one of the 94th Regiment, and two troopers of the mounted volunteers, during an investment which lasted eighty-eight days. The townspeople marked their appreciation of the conduct of the defence, and the treatment they themselves had received, by forwarding a complimentary address to the officer commanding and the garrison under him.[1]

[1] Major Montague was subsequently made a Companion of the Bath in recognition of his services; Sergeant Patrick Sharkey, 94th Regiment, received the distinguished-conduct medal.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEFENCE OF WAKKERSTROOM.

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Military position.

THE town—a mere village, but with the usual district public offices, Dutch church, school, and stores, —is properly called Marthinus Wesselstroom, but usually went by the name of the district of which it was the chief town. Surrounded by hills, some of which are within rifle-range, it lies in a hollow, with a river flowing along its north side, flooding a part of the flat during the rainy season, and thus affording protection from surprise in that quarter. The military camp and position were on the plateau and hills above, about a mile from, and partially overlooking the town.

This elevated region of the Transvaal being reputed free from the ravages of horse-sickness, the headquarters and larger portion of the King's Dragoon Guards were located here, as also the headquarters of the 58th Regiment, prior to these corps being withdrawn, in July and August, from the province. They were encamped on hills nearly a mile apart, with a declivity and stream between, the com-

missariat stores and intrenchment being with the 58th Regiment. When these troops left, only one company of the 94th Regiment, under Captain Froom, replaced them. In accordance with instructions, Captain Froom took up a position near that which the King's Dragoon Guards had vacated, completed a small fort, and moved into it the commissariat iron shed and supplies from the other side.

Disturbed state of the district.

Meanwhile the district was in a disturbed state. Pressure was being exercised in the collection of taxes. Payment in many cases was offered here, as elsewhere, conditionally on its being recognised that it was made under protest to the existing Government, but refused in this form. On the 3d December, about one hundred mounted Boers entered the town, with the view to intimidate the Landdrost, on account of some seizures he was about to make. Mr Schotz thereupon requested the assistance of the military; but Captain Froom — in accordance with the orders given to all the outposts, not to endanger the safety of the military position at any time through detaching too many men, or overweakening the post—did not deem it prudent, with the small force he had at his disposal, to send any body of soldiers into the town, though he himself rode down and watched the proceedings, afterwards reporting the incident by telegraph to Pretoria. Instructions were sent from military headquarters to hasten the completion of the fort, and have all in readiness for any emergency that might arise. Captain Froom,

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having been relieved by Captain Saunders with two companies of the 58th Regiment, left with his company on the 17th December for Standerton. An account of his march has been given in the latter part of Chapter II.

Arrival of Captain Saunders.

Leaving Newcastle on the 14th December, with four companies of infantry and thirty-three ox-waggons, Captain Saunders reached Mount Prospect—where Sir George Colley later on established his camp—early the following morning. There a young Englishman delivered a message informing him that a force of Boers was on the Transvaal border, under Commandant Van der Schijff, who had orders to prevent the troops crossing. Proceeding on, considerable delay was experienced—four to five hours—in passing the waggons over a difficult spruit in the vicinity of Majuba Hill and Laing's Nek. Six mounted Boers were seen on a hill to the right, but these soon rode away, and Laing's Nek was crossed and Coldstream reached the same evening. Two of the companies and the convoy of commissariat waggons, intended for Standerton, were detached to join Captain Froom's party coming from Wakkerstroom. Continuing his march at daybreak, Captain Saunders, with his two companies, arrived at his destination on the afternoon of the 16th.

On the 18th, a special messenger brought intelligence from Standerton that the Boers, having occupied Heidelberg, had proclaimed the Republic. The following day, not being able to communicate with

Pretoria — the telegraph line having been destroyed in that direction for some days—Captain Saunders succeeded in passing a message through to Pietermaritzburg, inquiring whether the country was to be considered in a state of war; how far he would be justified in proceeding to extreme measures with armed parties approaching the town or camp; and whether a detachment should be sent to hold the town. No reply was received for some days, the line having apparently been damaged. But on the 24th it had again been put in working order, and messages were received from Major Montague—who had just reached Standerton — and the Deputy Adjutant-General at Pietermaritzburg. The former officer told of the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster, and gave a warning against being deceived by parties attempting to approach under flags of truce. Colonel Deane intimated that a copy of Sir George Colley's instructions for the guidance of officers commanding garrisons would be forwarded; meanwhile armed parties approaching the camp or town, refusing to answer when challenged, were to be fired upon; on other matters of defence Captain Saunders was to exercise his own discretion.

Instructions from Sir George Colley.

A message also from Sir George Colley directed the Landdrost to call a meeting of the loyal inhabitants of the district, so as to ascertain how many were willing to take up arms in defence of the town, in conjunction with the military. The meeting was held the same day, about eighty persons attending. At the commencement of the proceedings every one was required to sign a declaration, to the effect that he

Volunteers for defence of the town called for.

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was a loyal subject of her Majesty; whereupon about thirty people left the Court-house. The object of the meeting having been explained, Captain Saunders offered to furnish thirty soldiers for the defence of the town, provided a similar number of volunteers would join them. More than that number having given in their names, a picket of an officer and thirty-three men was sent to occupy the Court-house, which was then placed in a state of defence.

The last post-cart, bringing letters from Pretoria, arrived on the 22d December. All letters had been opened at Heidelberg,—those of an official nature, containing orders or instructions, retained; but private ones, after being marked in red ink, "Z. A. R." —South African Republic—allowed to pass.

Projected capture of the town frustrated.

Captain Saunders received information of an intention on the part of the Boers to enter the town in large numbers, under pretext of attending the *Nachtmaal*, then being held in the Dutch church. Their arms were to be hidden in a waggon, and, when opportunity offered, distributed, and an endeavour made to take possession of the town. Orders were therefore given to watch all waggons, and prevent their being drawn up in the market-square in such a manner as readily to form a laager. Had any large number of Boers come in, Captain Saunders intended searching the waggons. On the 26th, however, the last day of the *Nachtmaal*, a mounted man brought a letter, which had the effect of causing the Boers hastily to leave the church, although the service

was not concluded, inspan their oxen, and quit the town.

Town defences.

As soon as the Boers had left, the military—a protest made by the Dutch minister notwithstanding—took possession of the church to form a central defensive station, and fortified the building. The Court-house being commanded by the church, at a distance of a hundred yards, was considered untenable, and thereupon dismantled, and the public records removed. The upper or western side of the town was, besides, hidden from it by rising ground, whereas the church had a good look-out all round. The daily process of relieving the town detachment being found to weaken the garrison at the fort for the time, as well as render the party liable to be cut off going or returning in the event of sudden attack, a permanent detachment of the same strength was given, from the 28th December, under Lieutenant Read, furnished with two hundred rounds per man, and twenty-one days' provisions. Two stores—Murray's and Richard's—were also placed in a proper state for defence and occupation by volunteers. Of the latter, about forty-five had been enrolled, mostly mounted.

A refugee having brought intelligence that the Boers were to hold a large meeting at Graskop, eighteen miles off, on the 28th, preparatory to attacking the place, Mr Fawcus, C.E., volunteered to proceed there and endeavour to ascertain their intentions. Private Osborne, dressed in civilian's clothes, was sent with him. The latter returned the same night, but Mr Fawcus remained a couple of days, at great risk

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to himself, until the termination of the meeting. It appeared that the Boers had really intended to attack; but, finally, learning that the Court-house had been vacated, and the church taken by the military as their chief position, they had been greatly disappointed, and had abandoned the idea. Their plan was, by sending 200 men to occupy the hills north and east of the fort, to prevent the garrison thence assisting the town; then, with the remainder of their force, to have made an attack on it. A portion, by keeping up a fire from the low ground by the river to prevent the soldiers leaving the Court-house, while their main body crossed the drift below the town, and, working round under cover of sloping ground, sought by a rush to gain possession of the church, when the fall of the Court-house would follow.

How messages were sent out.

The enemy established a cordon round the fort and town, detachments locating themselves in farmhouses in the immediate vicinity, which had been deserted by their owners—from 60 to 100 men in each—the commandant of the district being Mr Van Staden.

The Boer watch, however, was not so strictly kept but that messages were regularly sent to, and received from Newcastle, during the investment. Natives were more successfully employed in their conveyance than white men. On the 30th December two civilians attempted to carry despatches to Newcastle, but both were captured at the Slang river, though afterwards released. Then, the following day, Mr Fawcus—already spoken of—endeavoured to get away, but was

made prisoner through being unable to extricate his horse from a mud-hole it had sunk into. The Boers stripped him, and took away his clothes, but failed to discover the despatch he was carrying. They then threatened to shoot him; but through the intercession of one of them, a former friend, he was released, and his clothes given back, when he returned to Wakkerstroom, still with the despatch.

The same despatch was now given to a native to carry. Starting some time before daylight, he also was taken prisoner at Slang river. But, fortunately, he had caught sight of his captors before they had seen him, so he quickly turned back, to give them the impression that he was going towards Wakkerstroom. He was searched and questioned, but nothing was found on him, and he declared he was merely looking for cattle that had strayed. Being then allowed to go, he started as if for Wakkerstroom; but the Boers threatened to shoot him if he persisted in going in that direction, and told him that if he wanted his life he had better go back to Newcastle, which he did, and delivered his despatch safely. This same Kafir used to carry messages in and out weekly. The letter was written very small, rolled round a thin wire, placed in a quill, and then hidden in his thick hair. Thus delivered to him, he was left to choose his own time and mode of departure, which was effected without the knowledge of a soul. Although the sentries were most desirous to show their alertness by reporting his departure or return, yet he was never once challenged either when leaving or entering the town.

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Natives come in for protection.

Many Kafirs came in from the neighbouring kraals, bringing their cattle, and asking for protection from the Boers, who were *commandeering* their live stock. They were located in tents and vacated houses in the town, and rations given to them. Being required to watch their own oxen and sheep, they made excellent scouts, and proved of great service, giving the alarm on the least occasion.

Frequent raids were made by the enemy in their endeavours to capture the horses, mules, cattle, and sheep belonging to the garrison, townspeople, or natives. On the 10th January about a hundred Boers came round and over the high hill to the south of the town, while others took up their positions on a plateau above the jail. Then, under cover of a heavy fire, which engaged the attention of the defenders, four Boers rode down the hill, and succeeded in driving off eighty head of cattle and thirty young horses, belonging to two civilians, which were grazing with other herds close by. Two sons of Umtonga, a brother of Cetywayo—boys of only thirteen and fourteen years of age—distinguished themselves on this occasion. Seeing the danger from similar capture of a large herd of cattle belonging to the natives, they bravely rode out under a hot fire, and brought them in by themselves, merely remarking—"We have done nothing except what should be expected of us. If these cattle had been taken by the Boers, we should no longer be the sons of a chief."

Skirmishes.

Numerous skirmishes took place about the fort,

the enemy frequently occupying the kopjes to the north and east, whence, from long range, they could command the camp and intrenchment. On the 3d January they succeeded in wounding five oxen and two mules, grazing with others in the vicinity. The surgeon's horse was wounded on the 7th January, when inside the fort; and it being found that bullets frequently struck the interior slope of the parapet on the entrance and right faces, traverses were erected for better protection in this quarter. The men's arms and ammunition were placed, from before daybreak until evening, in readiness on the parapet of the fort; but any man employed on fatigue-duty, or requiring to proceed more than 200 yards away from the camp, always went armed. This latter order was found very useful on one occasion by a party of soldiers who were interrupted when bathing below, by finding that they were being practised at with Boer rifles. Quickly taking cover behind some rocks, they were soon able to cause their assailants, who imagined them unarmed, to beat a retreat. The tents were pitched outside the fort, with doors facing inwards, and with a low bullet-proof sod wall round each. In case of alarm, the tents were struck, and the men doubled into the fort, taking up their position in rear of their respective rifles. This prevented confusion, and liability of arms, &c., being left in the tents. In skirmishes of an ordinary kind, at long distances, the ammunition was not allowed to be wasted by any general fire, but was only returned by marksmen.

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It was believed that the enemy had several men placed *hors de combat* in the different skirmishes, riderless horses being occasionally seen, and men apparently being assisted off the ground.

An old 4-pounder howitzer—of doubtful soundness—was discovered in the town, and being mounted on the body of a water-cart, was occasionally run in and out of the fort and exercised by the men, thus answering the intended purpose, and making an impression on the Boers, who watched these proceedings from afar.

Mr Fawcus taken prisoner, but escapes.

Mr Fawcus—who had previously done such good and gallant service—was taken prisoner on the 11th January. Firing had been going on for nearly two hours between 120 Boers and our mounted men from the town, when the former at last fell back on Keat's Farm, a mile and a half away. Some of the Boers were afterwards seen returning to their camp, lying further off, and leaving behind a tempting large quantity of ready-cut forage on the ground. Thereupon Mr Fawcus went out to reconnoitre, and had approached to within 200 yards of the garden, when he was fired upon. Turning his horse quickly, the animal slipped upon the soft ground, and Mr Fawcus fell into the hands of six Boers who rode out after him. He managed, however, to throw his rifle and ammunition into the long grass by the roadside, and there they were found by our men a few days later. About eighty Boers had remained hidden behind the garden wall, in the hope that a party would have been sent out with a waggon to fetch in the forage. After a detention of ten days

in Joubert's camp, then about five miles off, on the road to Meek's, he was taken to Coldstream, eight miles from Laing's Nek; and while his escort were engaged drinking in the store there, he managed to secure a horse from the stable ready saddled, and make his way into Newcastle.

Boer movements.

On the 20th January, information having been obtained that the enemy were collecting on the south-west side, and contemplated a night attack on the town, first gaining possession of Michaelson's store—the owner of which was with the Boers—Captain Saunders sent twelve additional men from the fort to hold a corner house, adjoining this store, which occupied a good position for defence in that quarter, and, Murray's store opposite being already garrisoned, would subject the enemy to a cross-fire should the attempt be made. The next day, however, a Kafir brought intelligence that the enemy's plans had been suddenly altered, and that their force in the vicinity had received orders to return to Meek's, to be in readiness to arrest the advance of the British troops, which was expected to take place in a couple of days, from Newcastle.

A successful raid on Boer cattle and horses was carried out on the 30th January. The animals having been observed collected round Neudee's Farm, one of the enemy's posts in the vicinity, Captain Saunders assembled forty mounted volunteers, under their commanding officer, Captain Archer, and twenty—six of whom were mounted—of the 58th Regiment, under

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Captain Power, at the camp; and then despatched the former to search the east kopje, where two Boer vedettes were usually stationed, while Captain Power, with the infantry, took up a position on high ground overlooking Neudee's Farm. The Boer vedettes noticing these movements, rode down to the house and gave an alarm, when the remainder of their party were quickly in the saddle, driving their horses and cattle away, over the high range of hills in the Luneberg direction. They were immediately pursued by our mounted men, and a sharp fire commenced. Some of the Boers were wounded, and one of their horses galloped back into our hands. The infantry then advanced and entered the house. Finding the enemy's dinners inside ready-cooked, they very soon disposed of them, and with much enjoyment. Over eighty pairs of blankets, some rugs, arms, cooking-pots, and provisions were brought in, which proved very acceptable to the besieged garrison. The Boers were followed by the mounted men for some four miles, the skirmish lasting four hours. One hundred and thirty horses and fifteen head of cattle were taken, and kraaled in the town. Some of the captured horses were utilised for bringing in the forage and other spoil.

In the afternoon of the same day the river and spruits became very flooded, through the bursting of a waterspout in the vicinity. During the night the enemy reoccupied Neudee's Farm, and reinforced the post to double the original number. This was known at the fort; but the town garrison being unaware of it, twenty mounted volunteers went out in the morn-

ing to collect more forage at Neudee's Farm, when, on approaching the house, they were fired upon, and had to beat a hasty retreat. On account of the swollen state of the river, no assistance could be given from the camp. During the retirement, a lad of sixteen, named Hilder, whose horse broke down, being left in rear, dismounted, turned his horse loose, and lay down behind a rock with his rifle. An advanced party of four Boers were coming on, without perceiving him, when he fired at the leading man, at only sixty yards' distance, shooting him through the breast, so that he dropped dead off his horse. His three companions at once turned and rode down the hill to rejoin their main body, who also refrained from advancing until Hilder had had time to follow his comrades.

After this, to obviate difficulties in communication when the river became impassable, Captain Saunders ingeniously contrived to construct a telephone, to work between his tent at the camp and Lieutenant Read's quarter in the town, utilising for the purpose some portion of the telegraph wire left undestroyed by the enemy.

Sharp skirmish.

On the 22d February a skirmish commenced through an attempt made by a party of Boers to cut off some natives returning from visiting their kraals, lying to the north-west of the camp. Captain Saunders, seeing their danger, telephoned to the town for a party of mounted volunteers to be sent to cover their retreat. Fire was opened, then the Boers were reinforced, and a sergeant and fifteen men

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of the 58th Regiment, with five mounted infantrymen, left the camp to assist the volunteers. In the course of the skirmish one party of the enemy retired along a valley, between the north and east kopjes, whereupon the mounted infantrymen detached themselves from the volunteers to ride after them, and had gone about 160 yards before they noticed that another party of about forty Boers were galloping down a hill some distance to the west, and working round to get in their rear. The soldiers, having remounted their horses, attempted to join their comrades on the north kopje, but two of their horses were soon wounded and another killed. Private Mayes, one of those thus dismounted, was also shot in the leg while on the ground, and fell on his face into the long grass. Private Bennett was pursued by seven or eight Boers, who fired at but missed him. Having his own rifle loaded, and one of them coming up and galloping alongside of him, he fired over-arm and shot him. Another Boer now came up, and, striking him between the shoulders with his rifle, knocked him off his horse. The Boer then dismounted, reloaded his rifle, and deliberately fired at him at only fifteen paces off, the bullet shattering his leg. He lay hidden in the long grass for nearly two hours, and might probably have continued longer, but that one of the Boers moving about having discovered him, waved a white cloth and planted it by him to mark the spot where he was and show that he required help. As soon as the enemy had withdrawn, a stretcher-party was sent out, about two

miles, from the fort to bring the poor fellow in. Amputation followed, but too much blood had already been lost for the operation to prove successful, and he died the same evening. One of the infantry party on the kopje was likewise mortally wounded.

Gallant behaviour of Private Osborne.

The conduct of Private Osborne, 58th Regiment, one of the mounted men on this occasion, deserves special mention. Seeing Private Mayes fall in the long grass, he watched the spot, when, Mayes rising and attempting to run but again falling, he rightly conjectured that he was only wounded, and determined to go out to bring him in. He appealed to a volunteer to let him have his horse to lead to the assistance of his comrade, but without effect, the volunteer urging that no one could reach the wounded man under such a fire. Osborne thereupon rode straight from the cover he was under to the spot where he had seen Mayes fall, between 200 and 300 yards in front of a line of forty-two Boers. Having come up to Mayes, he managed to drag him up behind on his horse, and slinging Mayes's rifle over his own shoulder, remarked that "the Boers should not get even that." Meanwhile every available man had kept up a rapid but accurate fire on the Boers. Both the men and horse escaped, though bullets were striking all around them, one hitting Osborne's rifle close to where he had hold of it, cutting away the wood-work under the back-sight.[1] As far as could be ascertained, the enemy had six men killed and

[1] The Victoria Cross was awarded for this gallant deed.

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wounded in this skirmish, who were carried away in two spring-carts to an adjoining farm.

Armistice.

News of the disaster incurred at Majuba Hill, and death of Sir George Colley, was obtained on the 3d March; and on the 8th a flag of truce delivered a letter purporting to give the terms of an eight days' armistice entered into. The envelope was headed "On Service Z. A. Republic," and franked "P. Joubert," but the contents were unvouched for by any British authority. Two days later, another Boer messenger informed the commanding officer that, in accordance with the conditions of the armistice, a waggon, with provisions for 140 men for eight days, had arrived, in charge of an English officer and a conductor, which had been unloaded a mile and a half away, as no communication could be allowed between the parties; and that, therefore, a waggon should be sent from the camp to fetch the supplies. Captain Saunders informed the messenger that he had had no official intimation of the genuineness of the armistice; that until he received instructions from his general, or was satisfied on that point, he must decline to send a waggon; and further, that he should not require any provisions for either the townspeople or troops for the next seven months! The flag of truce, however, again appeared shortly after this interview, and satisfied Captain Saunders, by showing him a paper of instructions, signed by Sir Evelyn Wood, for the officer in charge of the waggon.

On the 17th March another Boer letter arrived, stating that the armistice had been extended four days,—a similar indifferently written document to the former one, but still no accompanying voucher which could justify any officer in acting on its contents. Two days afterwards four more days' provisions were received, when the officer in charge confirmed the Boer notification. The Boers who had accompanied the waggon declared that peace was as good as concluded, and that there would be no more fighting, for "Mr Wood" said that too many men had been lost, and he did not intend to lose any more. They swaggered a good deal about Majuba, and the rifles they had captured from the English; at the same time acknowledging that they were very glad that the war was to be at an end, as the weather was very trying, and they could not have stayed much longer at the Nek, owing to the want of grass.

Notification of peace.

Finally, on the 24th March, Lieutenant Gossett, 95th Regiment, arrived, bearing a despatch from headquarters, notifying that peace had been made. Asked to dine with the officers, the messenger of peace at first demurred, having pictured to himself a starved garrison after having undergone three months' investment, and proposed that he should be allowed to bring his own ration of tinned meat and biscuit. He was agreeably surprised to find himself sitting down to a comfortable meal, made most appetising by an excellent cook from the ranks—soup, tinned salmon, an *entrée*, a large fat turkey, curry, macaroni and cheese, salad, &c.—and the good fare washed down

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by beer, sherry, and a magnum of champagne. In fact Wakkerstroom was never at a loss for provisions. Flour certainly had been used up by the 20th January, and biscuits were then served out; but, only that ammunition might have become scarce, the place could have held out for several months longer.

The terms of the peace, therefore, brought disappointment to all. Outspoken regret was heard on all sides. That, with large reinforcements at hand, peace negotiations should have been entered upon, while the Boers still retained hold of the posts they had taken up in Natal itself, and that the British relief column should, by the provisions acquiesced in by a British general, be debarred from occupying these posts, much less set foot on Transvaal territory, or join the comrades they were intended to succour in the lately besieged garrisons, was almost incredible, and a bitter pill to swallow.[1]

[1] Captain Saunders afterwards received a step in rank in recognition of his services.

CHAPTER X.

THE NATAL RELIEF COLUMN.

The main body of the enemy

As soon as the several English military posts in the Transvaal had been invested by the Boers, and communication with them cut off, the main body of the enemy assembled in the neighbourhood of the Natal border, with the object of disputing the entrance of any relief column from that direction. And when it was clearly ascertained that the English reinforcements were advancing from Newcastle, intending to cross into the Transvaal at Coldstream, the Boer general at once forestalled them, crossed the border into Natal for about ten miles, and occupied the position of Laing's Nek. Then, the English head-quarter camp having been formed at Mount Prospect, four miles from the Nek, General Joubert, finding that there was no mounted force to prevent him, sent his patrols still further into Natal, thus interrupting Sir George Colley's line of communication to the rear, with Newcastle, and even beyond, through the Biggarsberg, with Ladysmith.

invades Natal.

It is not our present purpose to describe the cam-

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paign in these parts, or to detail the successive efforts made by Sir George Colley to roll back the invasion of the colony, and force the Boers from the positions they had taken up on Natal territory. We only write of the English garrisons and forces in the Transvaal, and in speaking of the Natal Column shall only refer to some of the causes which appear to have operated to prevent the latter—even when reinforcements had joined it from England—from reaching or relieving the former, but led, instead, to peace negotiations which were not, and cannot be now regarded with satisfaction from an English point of view.

Premature movement made by Sir George Colley from Newcastle,

By prematurely moving forward from Newcastle, before his cavalry reinforcements could reach him, Sir George Colley not only showed the enemy by which road he intended to strike into the Transvaal—thus losing the chance, by feints and forced marches, of seizing the more advantageous positions on the route before the enemy could occupy them in force—but he rendered his line of communication behind him difficult, and liable to be cut at any moment.

thus placing his column in similar position to that of the Pretoria garrison.

And in making his headquarters at Mount Prospect, he placed his column in much the same position, with communications cut, as that at the time occupied by the garrison of Pretoria—one among others intended to be relieved by this very column—with this difference in his favour, that his force, while more considerable, consisted wholly of regular troops; and that he was not embarrassed with a large civil

population of doubtful tendencies in the midst of his camp. To carry the comparison further: although the total force of his enemy was greater than that latterly investing Pretoria, yet it may be doubted if the number of Boers actually encountered in the several actions of Laing's Nek, Ingogo, and Majuba Hill, much exceeded those met with by much smaller columns, traversing over longer distances, in the sorties made by the garrison of Pretoria.

Mistaken estimate of Boer power.

That, when the Boer rising was first known to him, Sir George Colley wholly underrated the power and ability of the foe he would shortly have to contend against, is evident from a remark he makes on the 19th December, when writing to the Secretary of State for the Colonies: "The military force which I shall have at my disposal in the Transvaal when the reinforcements—those from Natal—have all joined, will, I think, be sufficient for the task devolving on them."[1] This was the more strange after the warnings given, months before, by Colonel Bellairs, against the premature reduction of the troops in the Transvaal, and pointing out the necessity of retaining the cavalry regiment. Again, on the 21st December, Colonel Bellairs writes from Pretoria: "Large reinforcements are urgently necessary, especially cavalry. There must be six or seven thousand rebels in the field, who, under good leadership, exhibit courage, discipline, and organisation."[2] Yet, notwithstanding

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2783), Feb. 1881, No. 37.

[2] Sir George Colley subsequently found that this estimate of the Boer forces, made by Colonel Bellairs on the 21st December, was moderate. On the 12th January he writes: "The reports of the forces the Boers

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these recommendations, and the lesson conveyed by the disaster experienced at Bronkhorst Spruit, all pointing to the impossibility of successfully moving through the country without cavalry, the Relief Column, collected at Newcastle, was pushed on to Mount Prospect with only about a hundred mounted men attached to it.[1]

So confident was Sir George Colley of his ability to cope with the insurrection, that, though he had been informed of the Boers, to the number of from 4000 to 6000, having taken possession of Heidelberg and established their Government there on the 16th December, he wrote, three days later, notifying his intention to advance with a column—eight companies of infantry, two field and two mountain guns, and only two troops of mounted men—and expectation of reaching Standerton about the 20th January.[2]

have actually in the field vary very much—from 7000 to 16,000. I am induced to think that the first number is nearest the truth. Of these, about one-half are said to be at the headquarter camp; the rest distributed in corps detached to watch Potchefstroom, Pretoria, &c., and to dispute my advance."

[1] About seventy or eighty of the Natal Mounted Police also accompanied the column, but were not intended to cross into the Transvaal.

[2] Sir G. Pomeroy Colley to Sir O. Lanyon.

"*December* 19, 1880.

"I am sending up at once four companies 58th, and two companies 60th, and two field and two mountain guns; two troops, one of mounted infantry, and one furnished from detachments King's Dragoon Guards and Army Service Corps now here; and two more companies 60th will follow in a few days. Whole should be concentrated at Standerton about 20th January. Deane goes up to Newcastle to make arrangements, and will take command under me, of forces on this side Heidelberg. I follow early in January. No movement of troops which can possibly bring a collision should take place pending my arrival with

The receipt of the details of Bronkhorst Spruit disaster did not alter this sanguine view; and about the 20th January was, at the beginning of that month, still mentioned as the probable time for the arrival of the Relief Column at Standerton.[1]

It was not, however, until the 24th January that Sir George Colley moved from Newcastle, thus selecting the most direct route to the Transvaal, but one presenting greater difficulties than the road leading to Wakkerstroom.[2]

Forward movement determined on.

Arrived at Mount Prospect, all contributed to impel Sir George Colley to make a forward movement and adventure an attack on Laing's Nek, without waiting for the reinforcements which, at the close of January, were drawing near,—the immediate proximity of the enemy in front of the headquarter camp barring further progress; a natural desire to be doing something towards the relief of the Transvaal garrisons, and free Natal from the Boer inroad; and perhaps, above all, the feeling that some military advantage should be

reinforcements. I trust 94th have reached Pretoria and Standerton without molestation. Please keep me informed by all possible opportunities, and communicate this to Bellairs."—(C.—2783.)

[1] Chapter iii. p. 165.

[2] In his despatch of the 1st February 1881, Sir George Colley thus alludes to the motives which induced him to move forward from Newcastle on the 24th January: "The column thus formed was small in numbers and somewhat heterogeneous. But no further reinforcements could reach me for at least three weeks; and having regard to the effect of such delay on Pretoria, where the loyal population had had to take refuge in the camp, and is undergoing all the miseries of a close siege, and in Potchefstroom, where the garrison is scantily supplied and can scarcely hold out much longer, I decided to move forward at once with the force at my disposal."

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gained before the increasing disposition shown in England to offer terms of peace could have effect.

Action of Laing's Nek.

On the morning of the 28th January, without attempt to conceal his movements under the cover of night, Sir George Colley moved out from his camp, taking with him about 900 infantry, 180 mounted men,[1] and six guns. Halting below, and out of fire from the enemy's position,—an amphitheatre of hills, the Majuba on their right and other hills rising to the left, connected by a "nek" of table-land some 2000 yards in length, the road gradually rising and passing over the centre of the Nek,—Sir George Colley remained with the reserve, including the guns, to the right of the road. Five companies of the 58th Regiment were sent to scale the high ridge to our right of the Nek, while at the same time—9.30 P.M.—the mounted troops left to attack a conical hill in advance of—from the enemy's side—and connected with the ridge about to be stormed by the infantry. The two attacks were not, however, delivered simultaneously. The mounted troops, gallantly as they charged up the steep hill, were soon, through heavy loss, obliged to give way and retire, thus releasing the Boers who defended that portion of their position, in time to move round and pour in a fire on the right rear of the 58th Regiment, then struggling up the sides of the lofty ridge. The five companies, instead of being left to the leading of their own officers, with the commanding officer of the regiment at their head, were led into action by the Deputy Adjutant-General—who

[1] Including the Natal Mounted Police ; see *ante,* note [1], p. 372.

had been placed in command of the Natal Column—and three other staff officers. These, being mounted and pushing forward too eagerly in front, rendered the advance unnecessarily hurried, thus bringing the men under fire in a breathless condition, and less fitted to cope with the situation. Though encountering an accurate fire from the front and right rear, they still endeavoured to get up the steep incline; but dash and daring, conspicuous in this as it was also in the cavalry attack, was of no avail. The enemy's fire proved too destructive, and, after very serious losses, a retirement had to be effected. The reverse caused a loss of 7 officers and 76 men killed, and 2 officers and 110 men wounded.

Observations on action at Laing's Nek.

It was obviously all-important—politically and otherwise—that no doubtful encounter with the enemy should be risked. A decisive defeat of the Boers in the first serious conflict would have gone far towards bringing about divisions in their counsels, and lessening resistance to the advance of the Relief Column, besides facilitating peace on the basis of the overtures already made. It should have been equally clear that the force Sir George Colley had with him—from the deficiency of cavalry—was, for further advance, wholly inadequate to protect a daily increasing line of communication, against the large bodies of mounted men the enemy could bring up at any point. The attack, then, of the enemy's position on the 28th January can only be regarded as another error, following close upon the initial mistake made

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in prematurely moving the column from Newcastle.

The manner in which the divided attack was carried out at Laing's Nek,—the two hills not being stormed simultaneously, and no supports being forthcoming—was destined to cause failure. Had the advance from the camp been made before dawn, and an attack delivered at daybreak on the centre of the Nek—the rise to which was comparatively gentle — the same marked courage and determination of the troops would, it may be conjectured, have stood a better chance of obtaining the success deserved, with probably fewer casualties; but even then, it may be doubted if such success could have been followed up.

Another error may perhaps be noticed, as contributing, if not to the failure of the attack, at all events to the increase in the number of casualties incurred —the staff heading the attacking infantry body. Surely the proper province of the staff officers was to have reserved themselves for the work of general supervision and direction of the movements taking place around them, rather than impulsively rushing forward to head a charge, and lead into action a small body of infantry attacking a hill, thus usurping the duties of the regimental officers. No doubt there may be occasions when the interference of staff officers in such a way is desirable or even necessary, — as when troops show signs of unsteadiness, or a tendency to give way and require rallying. But in this instance no such reason can be advanced. The demeanour of the 58th Regiment was all that could be desired.

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Action at the Ingogo.

The affair of the Ingogo, which followed that of Laing's Nek, eleven days later, was the natural outcome of the forward position prematurely taken up by Sir George Colley, with insufficient means for guarding his communications, and, at the same time, keeping the attention of the enemy occupied in his front. The repulse previously inflicted by the Boers had taught them their power to arrest the further advance of the British column, as then constituted, and enabled them to turn their attention to intercepting its line of communications. Thus it came about that, with the intention of giving a safe-conduct to his mail to Newcastle, which had been stopped the previous day by a strong patrol of the enemy, Sir George Colley himself accompanied a small column—five companies of the 60th Rifles, a detachment of thirty-eight mounted men,[1] two field and two mountain guns—to patrol the road for part of the way. No rations were taken. The movement was effected by daylight within sight of the enemy. The Ingogo was crossed, one company of the Rifles and the two mountain guns being left on a commanding point on the near side of the river, five miles distant from the camp. About noon, having surmounted the ridge and gained the plateau beyond, some three miles from the river, the troops were vigorously attacked on all sides by the Boers. For upwards of five hours their attack was maintained, to the disadvantage of our

[1] The Natal Mounted Police had, after the action of Laing's Nek, been sent back to Newcastle to guard against raids in that part of the colony.

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men; and only darkness and a heavy storm coming on enabled the remnant of the column with difficulty to steal away, leaving their killed and wounded on the ground.

While the action was proceeding, Sir George Colley had managed to send an order to the camp, directing that three companies of the 58th Regiment should be sent to guard the Ingogo drift; and this force being found in possession at the close of the day, is said to have caused the enemy to desist from an intention to occupy that position, and so cut off Sir George Colley's chance of retreat. As it was, the Boers expected to be able to renew their attack the following morning, all the artillery and other horses being believed by them to have been killed, and the removal of the guns thus prevented. But for favourable circumstances occurring—the heavy storm of rain, intense darkness, and the absence of any efficient watch on the enemy's part—the retreat could scarcely have been successfully carried out. Indeed it may be surmised that, had the Boers become aware of Sir George Colley's intention to retreat, taking his guns with him, they would quickly have followed up the victory they had already gained, and have beaten in detail the troops left with Sir George Colley and those guarding the Ingogo drift. The capture of the camp, with the few men then left in it, would have completed the annihilation of the headquarter column. As it was, the following casualties resulted: 5 officers and 61 men killed, and 4 officers and 68 men wounded.

Had Sir George Colley left the command of this patrol to his next senior officer, remaining himself in the camp or its immediate vicinity, in constant communication, by prearranged signalling, with the advanced body, there can be no doubt he would have been more within his province, and have been better placed to create a diversion or render assistance, and that, at least, no worse results would have ensued.

Action at Majuba Hill.

Another interval occurred of nearly three weeks, during which a portion of the reinforcements had come up—Sir E. Wood brought up a column 17th February—and the time was almost at hand when a general advance might be advantageously undertaken, when some evil genius—who or what will perhaps now never be ascertained—prompted Sir George Colley to occupy the Majuba Hill, the extreme right of the enemy's position, but only used as a look-out post by day. From Mount Prospect the hill appeared to offer the advantage of overlooking nearly all the Boer position; and in point of fact, the top—rising about 2000 feet above the centre of the Nek—once gained, such was found to be the case; for below and to the right might be viewed, mapped out as it were, the whole extent,—between three and four miles,—of the position held against us by perhaps 3000 Boers. On the Nek plateau were four separate waggon laagers, at from 1500 to 3000 yards' distance respectively; and on the crests of the hills and Nek, but a little drawn back, so as to be hidden from the

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view of those approaching in front until close up, were some slight shelter-trenches, in some cases placed the one line behind the other.

But such was the steep and precipitous nature of the sides and approaches to the top of Majuba Hill, that artillery could not, in ordinary course, be taken up. What object was hoped to be gained by isolating a body of infantry on the hill-top, in the manner in which it was done — without guns, Gatlings, or even rockets to reach the enemy's laagers below, and without prearrangement for immediately following up the possession of the hill by a general advance on the enemy's main position on the Nek — it is difficult to conceive. Locating himself in such a position, Sir George Colley became *en l'air*, unable to communicate with his camp, or exercise any general supervision over his forces otherwise than by signals, and that only if the hill-top were not enveloped in darkness, cloud, or mist. No attempt seems to have been made by any staff officer or other person belonging to the force to realise previously, by personal examination, the difficulties which would have to be encountered on the road up, or to reconnoitre the nature of the ground on the top of the hill, and ascertain how far its occupation would repay the risk attendant upon such an enterprise. Native guides were blindly trusted, who, had they not proved faithful, or had they been in collusion with the Boers, might easily have brought destruction on the column when struggling through the night, in long straggling line, often single file, up to the summit

of the height, by a tortuous, slippery, and sometimes rocky, precipitous path.

Taking with him a force—22 officers and 627 men—composed of detachments of the 3d Battalion 60th Rifles, 58th Regiment, 92d Highlanders, and the Naval Brigade, Sir George Colley left the camp at ten o'clock on the night of the 26th February. The vedette post close to the Umquela Hill being reached an hour later, the detachment of the Rifles — two companies—was left, with instructions to occupy the top of that mountain with some men. Further on, midway between Umquela and Majuba, a company of the 92d Highlanders was dropped, with orders to intrench itself. Some delay was occasioned by the rear of the column missing its way; but finally, between four and five o'clock in the morning, much exhausted after such toil—the men being heavily weighted—the column, now only about 400 strong, gained the summit.

The general configuration of the plateau was—like that of most of the table-tops of such mountains or hills, so common in South Africa—of a saucer-like shape, though rolling. It being still dark, and the declivities and approaches unknown, the greater portion of the men on coming up were simply extended round the exterior—some 1200 yards—of the plateau, showing on the sky-line, with a small reserve under a rocky ridge in the centre. Little alteration seems to have been made in this distribution afterwards, and, it is said, men still continued to guard precipitous parts, from which direction no attack ought to have

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been anticipated. No attempt was made to throw up shelter-trenches—withdrawn from the brow after the manner of those made by the Boers—on spots where they would have arrested any attempt to gain a footing on the crest; though the men themselves, in many instances, became aware of the necessity of providing cover, and made slight attempts to obtain it with small piles of turf and stones. Of warning of attack there was ample and continued notice. From daylight, when some imprudent shots, fired at distant Boers, made the enemy aware of the position we had gained, until one o'clock, when the hill was lost, firing had been going on, and the enemy gradually, but steadily and with slight loss, approaching the summit. At first—about 6 A.M.—the Boers appeared alarmed for the safety of their waggons, and were seen inspanning their oxen—not at the moment realising the fact that we were without guns or even rockets,—why without the latter we are unable to explain; but soon, finding that no attempt was made to molest them, they turned their whole attention to driving us off the hill, an object in which they succeeded but too well, after about seven hours' skilful work,—thus forcibly illustrating the superior advantage of practical to theoretical training.

From such a result, coming on as it did, it can only be inferred that those who were responsible for the supervision of such matters remained in ignorance to the last of the nature of the ground and approaches by which the enemy ascended to the crest, and so matured no effective plan for defending the hill.

There was, apparently, an absence of direction and decision as to what was necessary to be done. Hence panic and flight, with attendant heavy losses,—6 officers and 90 men killed; 7 officers and 125 men wounded; and 7 officers and 49 men taken prisoners.

What the English reverses brought about.

The three reverses — Laing's Nek, Ingogo, and Majuba — cost the Natal Relief Column, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, about 38 officers and 579 men. No good object had been gained, but the contrary. The fighting had been wholly profitless and unnecessary, while it had the effect of teaching the Boers their true strength. Battle had been prematurely given. A more correct appreciation of the warlike capacities of the enemy would have counselled greater prudence. That lesson had now, at last, been painfully learnt, but too late. Immediately after the action at Majuba, the *ad interim* English commander—the newly appointed general to succeed the gallant but unfortunate Sir George Colley being then on the seas—arranged an armistice followed up by a peace.

General good behaviour of Boers.

Thus ended a successful revolt. Although a few Boers had been unscrupulous, and here and there, to gain their ends, had employed means which conflicted with the more civilised usages of modern war; and though cases of murder, or closely verging on murder, occurred, yet it must be conceded that rarely has a general revolt of a people been carried to its end with so few instances of cruelty, exhibiting the ordinary darker shades of insurrection. Their con-

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duct, at least, will compare favourably with that of any people during risings which have taken place elsewhere.

A flight of fancy.

The victories gained by the Boers over the English troops were such as any young nation might well be proud of. That of Majuba Hill was brilliant in the extreme, and will rightly be handed down to succeeding generations of South Africans as a grand achievement performed by their ancestors.

For centuries we have sung the praises of an idealised King Arthur. However much of the mythical there may be in the actual existence of or deeds performed by the Good King and his knights, at least the accounts handed down to us may be taken as traditionary stories of the chiefs of the ancient Britons, with whom we English were once at war in Wales, and who eventually were subjugated by us — their country then, including its heroes and myths, becoming incorporated with our own.

To come to nearer and better known times, it has taken barely a century to transform the rebel George Washington into a hero in our estimation, and for Englishmen generally to feel pride in the fact that their former foe sprang from our race.

Is it too fanciful, or going too far in the present day, to suggest that hereafter, in generations yet to come, a similar change may come over English feeling with regard to the Boer War of Independence? or to dream that—the mineral wealth of the country having attracted hundreds of thousands, and the process of

welding the Dutch and English inhabitants into one people having been accomplished—the future Anglo-South African may yet be seen subscribing for a public statue, and reserving a niche in his library for the bust of Piet Joubert, alongside those of Washington and Cromwell?

CHAPTER XI.

ARMISTICE AND PEACE.

CHAP. XI. — Reflections.

THE history of South Africa in recent years, when it comes to be correctly written, will abound in illustrations of the evil results so commonly following a too precipitate action on the part of statesmen, governors, and generals, when a little more calm calculation or delay—perhaps leaving to others coming after them the accomplishment, safely and satisfactorily, of tasks too difficult to be undertaken at the time by themselves—would have saved their future reputations.

We have in these pages indicated several such instances—commencing with the premature annexation of the Transvaal and ending with the impatience of Sir George Colley in moving forward to attack the enemy before his full reinforcements had reached him. But will not history record even a further and later instance? Will not the hasty eager way in which the armistice was sought for, and the peace negotiations afterwards pushed on—throwing up every point which might have been gained to cover our previous

loss of prestige, and soothe our wounded *amour propre* —receive comment in the same sense?

The telegraphic correspondence for this period, presented to Parliament in March[1]—the same month in which it had taken place—offers a very curious study, some may think of a somewhat psychological nature, which has scarcely received all the attention it deserves. The strange shuffling together of peace with war proposals in the same telegram, or alternately in telegrams rapidly following one after the other, must have been very puzzling to many. Even Lord Kimberley was unable to make out from what quarter the suggestion for an armistice first proceeded; and, to enable him to reply to questions in Parliament, was obliged to inquire of Sir Evelyn Wood on the subject by telegraph on the 12th March.

The want of sequence in which the telegrams appear in the Blue-book, to show the order in which they were received and answered in Natal, is not calculated to give a clear perception of the action, motives, and amount of responsibility which attaches to each person concerned. In order to lessen the perplexity which may not unnaturally have been thus engendered in the minds of some who have looked over these telegraphic messages, we have given the more important of those bearing on the peace negotiations as footnotes or in the Appendix, and will here try to trace the story they tell and the impression they leave.

The President of the Orange Free State, in the

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2837), South Africa, March 1881.

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Action of President Brand.

appeals he so repeatedly addressed by telegraph to Sir George Colley, Sir Hercules Robinson, and Lord Kimberley, with the object of stopping further collision, had, as early as the 11th January,[1] urged the immediate appointment of a Commissioner to inquire into the alleged Boer grievances in the Transvaal, and bring about a settlement; but without other immediate effect than being requested to inform the Boer leaders that if they ceased from armed opposition, a scheme would be framed for the settlement of difficulties.[2] The actions of the 28th January and 8th February — Laing's Nek and Ingogo respectively — took place on the Natal border while these messages were passing to and fro.

[1] See Blue-book (c.—2783), South Africa, February 1881. Enclosures to No. 32. President Brand commenced as early as the 6th December to urge attention to the critical state of the Transvaal. While Sir Owen Lanyon, on the 5th, was writing, "I still do not think there is much cause for anxiety," Mr Brand telegraphed, the day after, to the Administrator at Cape Town: "I read with very deep concern the account of the very serious aspect of affairs in the Transvaal. The gravity of the situation will, I hope, be accepted by your Excellency as an excuse for the liberty of asking your Excellency whether your Excellency will not devise some means by which a collision, which seems imminent, may be averted—a collision which will have the most disastrous results, and seriously imperil the prestige of the white man with the native tribes."

[2] The Right Hon. The Earl of Kimberley to Governor Sir Hercules Robinson, G.C.M.G.

(Telegraphic.)

"*26th January.*

"I have received the following telegram from President Brand through the Consul of the Orange Free State: 'Is it not possible to offer to the people of the Transvaal, through the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, who is now in Cape Town, certain terms and conditions, provided they cease from armed opposition, making it clear to them how this is to be understood?' Telegram ends.

"I have to instruct you to inform President Brand that if armed op-

On the 13th February Sir George Colley telegraphed that he had received a letter from Mr Paul Kruger, to the purport that, if the deed of annexation were cancelled, the Boers would be willing to co-operate with the British Government, but, otherwise, would fight to the end.

Lord Kimberley's proposed terms for negotiating peace.

To this Lord Kimberley, on the 16th February, replied: "Inform Kruger that, if Boers will desist from armed opposition, we shall be quite ready to appoint Commissioners with extensive powers, and who may develop the scheme referred to in my telegram to you of the 8th instant. Add that, if this proposal is accepted, you are authorised to agree

position should at once cease, her Majesty's Government would thereupon endeavour to frame such a scheme as, in their belief, would satisfy all enlightened friends of the Transvaal community."

No. 14.—Governor Sir G. Pomeroy Colley to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 6th February 1881.)

"*5th February.*

"Have received two long telegrams from Brand, earnestly urging that I should communicate your reply to him to Boers, state nature of scheme, and guarantee their not being treated as rebels if they submit. I have replied that I can give no such assurance, and can add nothing to your words, but suggested he may do good by making your reply known through Transvaal."

No. 18.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor Sir G. Pomeroy Colley.

"*8th February.*

"Have received your telegram of 5th instant. Inform President Brand that her Majesty's Government will be ready to give all reasonable guarantees as to treatment of Boers after submission, if they ceased from armed opposition, and that a scheme will be framed for the permanent friendly settlement of difficulties. Add, also, that her Majesty's Government will be glad if President will communicate to leaders of Boers this as well as former messages addressed to him."

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to suspension of hostilities on our part."[1] The Secretary of State for War also telegraphed the same day: "With reference to Lord Kimberley's telegram as respects the interval before reply from Boers is received, we do not bind your discretion; but we are anxious for your making arrangements to avoid effusion of blood"[2]—meaning, we presume, in the interval.

On the following day—17th February—Sir George Colley replied that he would "communicate with

[1] No. 35.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Deputy-Governor, Natal.

"16*th February.*

"Telegraph to Sir E. Wood, as follows: Telegram received on 14th from Colley,—'13*th.*—Letter received from Kruger, purport,—Anxious to make one more effort to stop bloodshed; Boers driven to arms in self-defence; views continually misrepresented; if deed of annexation cancelled, willing to co-operate with British Government everything for good of South Africa; know that English people would be on their side if truth reached them; are strong in this conviction that would not fear inquiry of a Royal Commission, which they know would give them their rights; ready, therefore, if troops ordered to withdraw from Transvaal, to give free passage and withdraw from their positions; if annexation upheld, will fight to the end.'

"Have to-day sent following answer to preceding: Inform Kruger that if Boers will desist from armed opposition, we shall be quite ready to appoint Commissioners with extensive powers, and who may develop the scheme referred to in my telegram to you of the 8th instant. Add that if this proposal is accepted you are authorised to agree to suspension of hostilities on our part. Message ends.

"If communication with Colley still interrupted, convey my reply to Boer leaders by most expeditious means."

[2] No. 37.—Secretary of State for War to the General Officer Commanding, Natal and Transvaal.

(Sent 16th February 1881.)

"With reference to Lord Kimberley's telegram as respects the interval before reply from Boers is received, we do not bind your discretion; but we are anxious for your making arrangements to avoid effusion of blood."

Kruger accordingly."[1] But, afterwards, wishing to have the bearing of Lord Kimberley's instructions more clearly defined, he inquired whether, there being no further hostilities, he was to leave Laing's Nek, which was in Natal territory, in Boer occupation, and our garrisons in the Transvaal isolated and short of provisions, or occupy former and relieve latter?[2]

Lord Kimberley replied on the 19th February: "It will be essential that garrisons should be free to provision themselves, and peaceful intercourse with them allowed; but we do not mean that you should march to the relief of garrisons or occupy Laing's Nek if arrangement proceeds. Fix reasonable time within which answer must be sent by Boers."

Sir George Colley then—on 21st February—wrote to Mr Kruger, fixing forty-eight hours as the time

[1] No. 41.—The Governor of Natal to Secretary of State.

(Received at Colonial Office, at 8 P.M., 17th February.)

"NEWCASTLE, 17*th*, 4.15 P.M.

"Wood, with column, arrived to-day; no opposition on road. Boers apparently returned to Laing's Nek. Telegraph repaired. Have received your telegram to Sir E. Wood, and will communicate with Kruger accordingly."

[2] No. 49.—Deputy-Governor of Natal to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 1.45 P.M., 19th February 1881.)

"PIETERMARITZBURG, 19*th February*.

"Colley telegraphs to you: 'Latter part of your telegram of 16th to Wood not understood; there can be no hostilities if no resistance is made; but am I to leave Laing's Nek in Natal territory in Boer occupation, and our garrisons isolated and short of provisions, or occupy former and relieve latter?'"

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within which an answer must be given.[1] No immediate result following, he moved and occupied Majuba Hill on the night of the 26th February, falling in action there the following day.[2] It subsequently appeared that the delay in answering Sir George Colley's letter arose from the absence of Mr Kruger from the Boer camp, he having proceeded to Heidelberg and thence to Rustenburg.

Sir Evelyn Wood assumes command.

Sir Evelyn Wood, being the next senior officer present, assumed the command of the troops on the death of Sir George Colley, and leaving Pietermaritz-

[1] "ARMY HEADQUARTERS, NEWCASTLE, 21*st February* 1881.

"SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst.

"In reply, I am to inform you that on the Boers now in arms against her Majesty's authority ceasing armed opposition, her Majesty's Government will be ready to appoint a Commission, with large powers, who may develop the scheme referred to in Lord Kimberley's telegram of the 8th inst., communicated to you through his honour, President Brand.

"I am to add that upon this proposal being accepted within forty-eight hours, I have authority to agree to a suspension of hostilities on our part.—I have, &c.,

"G. POMEROY COLLEY, *Major-General, Commanding Forces.*

"P. KRUGER, Esq., Heidelberg."

[2] No. 65.—Major-General Sir E. Wood to the Secretary of State for War.

(Received 27th February 1881.)

"PIETERMARITZBURG, 6.30 P.M., 27*th February*.

"Colley occupied Majuba Mountain last night. Stewart and Fraser, Royal Engineers, 20 officers, 600 men of 58th, 3d Bn. 60th, 92d, and some Naval Brigade.

"Was attacked at 7 A.M.; repulsed all attacks till 2.30, when our people were driven back, and are retreating, losing heavily.

"Essex telegraphs from Mount Prospect there is no doubt Sir George is amongst the killed, and Colonel Bond corroborates.

"I shall go back to Newcastle to-morrow."

burg on the 28th February, reached Mount Prospect Camp on the 2d March.

On the 28th February Sir Evelyn Wood was informed that Sir Frederick Roberts had been appointed to succeed Sir George Colley, and would sail on the 4th March. Further telegrams told him of large reinforcements being sent out; and, on the 1st March, the Secretary of State for War significantly adds: "Although Sir F. Roberts is going out with large reinforcements, we place full confidence in you, and do not desire to fetter your military discretion."

Sir Evelyn Wood's instructions those already sent to Sir George Colley.

The only instructions Sir Evelyn Wood had to work upon—with a view to bringing about "an honourable and satisfactory settlement of the affairs of the Transvaal"—appear to have been those already referred to as having been given to Sir George Colley by Lord Kimberley's telegram of the 16th February—the first condition, with regard to the Boers, being that they should "desist from armed opposition."[1]

In order to ascertain what were the intentions of the Boer leaders in this respect, it was then highly desirable that the cause of delay in replying to Sir George Colley's letter, of the 21st February, to Mr Kruger, should be ascertained at once. Accordingly,

[1] See *ante*, p. 390. Lord Kimberley, in his letter of instructions to Sir Frederick Roberts, dated 4th March, again refers to this telegram, and observes that, no reply having been received from Mr Kruger, he is "unable to say anything further on that subject at present."—Blue-book (c.—2866), No. 64.

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Lord Kimberley telegraphed inquiries on this subject on the 1st March.[1]

This telegram was received by Sir Evelyn Wood on his way to Mount Prospect Camp. He replied the following day, giving partial information, and adding: "Brand forwards message from Joubert to him complaining of Colley's move, and ends, will negotiate, but not submission or cease opposition. Bok's answer to Colley arrived here yesterday, explaining he could not answer for four days, as Kruger was in Heidelberg."[2] (? Rustenburg.)

On the 3d March, without waiting for Mr Kruger's reply, Sir Evelyn Wood is found making—in a mes-

[1] No. 74.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

"1*st March* 1881.

"Inform me, if you know, when Sir G. Colley made communication to Kruger in pursuance of my telegram of 16th February, what time he fixed within which answer must be given, and whether any, and if so, what communications have since passed between him and Boer leaders."

[2] No. 82.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 9 A.M., 4th March 1881.)

"NEWCASTLE, 2*d March*.

"Your telegram not clear, but in absence of Stewart, prisoner, am told by Hamilton, A.D.C., he believes twenty-four hours given, and on expiration there was no result, and Colley then moved. Brand forwards message from Joubert to him complaining of Colley's move, and ends, will negotiate, but not submission or cease opposition. Bok's answer to Colley arrived here yesterday, explaining he could not answer for four days, as Kruger was in Heidelberg." (? Rustenburg.)

No. 79.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

(Despatched from Colonial Office, 3.45 P.M., 3d March 1881.)

"3*d March*.

"My telegram of March 1st. If you find that Sir George Colley made

sage sent to Mr Brand—a strenuous, and, it must be presumed, a sincere attempt in the interests of peace. A duplicate of this message was despatched to the Colonial Office the following day—4th March.[1] Yet

communication to Kruger, but no answer has been received, inquire of Boer leaders whether an answer will be sent to you."

No. 83.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

"*4th March.*

"Your telegram of March 2d. State date on which Colley's communication sent to Boers, to whom addressed, and to what place. Was person to whom sent known to be competent to reply without reference to others? Reply as quickly as possible. I understand from your telegram that no answer has been received from Kruger, and therefore inquiry directed in my telegram of yesterday should still be made."

[1] No. 84.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated Fort Amiel, 2.10 P.M., 4th March 1881.

(Received, Colonial Office, 3 A.M., 5th March 1881.)

"*4th March.*

"Yours received as I left Mount Prospect; Colley wrote, 21st February, to Joubert, offering to suspend hostilities if answer were received within 48 hours, not 24, as I first telegraphed; he moved night of 26th. I expect answer when Kruger can be communicated with, but please read my telegram herewith sent yesterday to Brand.

"Message to Brand begins: '*3d March.*—I gratefully acknowledge your Honour's continuous efforts in the cause of peace, and I cordially desire such may ensue without further bloodshed. I know and esteem many of those now in arms against my Sovereign, and I therefore regret doubly they will not, by desisting from armed opposition, open the door to arrangements which I conscientiously believe might be rendered acceptable to every reasonable Africander. Any reinforcements I require are placed at my disposal, but I would greatly prefer they should not be sent here; I would gladly abstain from making any movement in advance of my present position for a few days, say till 10th March, if the Boers on their part promised the same, and you believe peace would at once ensue; but your Honour will understand, as they not only blockade our garrison in Transvaal, but occupy Natal territory, I cannot go further in my desire to stop the war.

"'Any communication you may desire to have (?made) to the Boers should be transmitted through our posts. I hear Mr Kruger has gone to Rustenburg. In justice to our common friend Sir George Colley, I

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Curious telegrams.

this had no sooner been forwarded than another telegram followed—within an hour—to Lord Kimberley, saying: "I suggest wait a day or two, as shall not be ready for another week, and then I must act if Potchefstroom is to be saved, as I hear that they have bread-stuff only till 15th, and then mealies, but how much I do not know. When I move I am confident, with God's blessing, of success."[1] The commencement of this telegram is rather mystifying, but would seem to imply that Sir Evelyn Wood was afraid of, and therefore deprecated the possibility of being urged to move forward too quickly.

Lord Kimberley, in his reply of the 5th March, approves of the message sent to the President of the Orange Free State, but adds: "We await answer from Boer leaders to communication made by Sir G. Colley to Kruger *before giving you any fresh instructions.*"[2] Until Mr Kruger's reply came, it was evident that

state he did not receive any answer to his message or letter, and I read Mr Bok's letter, which was not received until Sir George was dead.' Message ends."

[1] No. 85.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies. (Received, Colonial Office, 4 A.M., 5th March 1881.)

"*4th March.*

"I suggest wait for a day or two, as shall not be ready for another week, and then I must act if Potchefstroom is to be saved, as I hear they have bread-stuff only till 15th, and then mealies, but how much I do not know. When I move I am confident, with God's blessing, of success."

[2] No. 86.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

"*5th March.*

"Your telegram of 4th. We approve your message to President

no further instructions — beyond those contained in the telegram sent on the 16th February to Sir George Colley,[1]—could well be given; certainly none to move forward.

On the 5th March Sir Evelyn Wood telegraphs: "Joubert asks how far I will co-operate in Brand's propositions. I have offered to meet him to-morrow near Laing's Nek; if he answers this evening, shall follow strictly the lines of your instructions."[2]

The only instructions were those given to Sir George Colley by telegram of 16th February. Thus, without waiting for Mr Kruger's reply, without fresh instructions from his Government, without any pressure being put upon him, and though delay was certainly

Brand. We await answer from Boer leaders to communication made by Sir G. Colley to Kruger before giving you any fresh instructions."

No. 87.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 8.45 P.M., 5th March 1881.)

"CAMP, NEWCASTLE, *5th March*, 1.30 P.M.

"Line broken between camp and town office. River impassable, one swimmer drowned, hence delayed in receiving yours of yesterday. Colley wrote Kruger on 21st, addressing to Laing's Nek. Bok opened letter, and writing at Heidelberg, 25th, says Kruger is away, and cannot answer for four days, and immediately he receives will forward reply. Smith, fighting general, writes on 26th, Kruger had gone to Rustenburg, where Kafirs are restless."

[1] See *ante*, p. 390.

[2] No. 88.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 9 P.M., 5th March 1881.)

"NEWCASTLE, *5th March*, 4 P.M.

"Joubert asks how far I will co-operate in Brand's propositions. I have offered to meet him to-morrow near Laing's Nek; if he answers this evening, shall follow strictly the lines of your instructions."

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useful, as he was not in a position to attack or move forward, Sir Evelyn Wood would appear to have again taken the initiative to bring on negotiations.

Another—very lengthy—telegram to Lord Kimberley followed on the same day. Although dated four hours before the foregoing one, it would seem to have been sent after, and was received at the Colonial Office eight hours later. This message discusses questions which may be likely to crop up and prove troublesome, and how best to avoid them, so as not to interfere with the progress of the negotiations he, Sir Evelyn Wood, was endeavouring to bring about. Lord Kimberley is also told that Sir Evelyn Wood had "sent 'Times,' with debate on Ryland's motion, to Swart Dirk Uys, leading Wakkerstroom rebels now on Laing's Nek."[1]

Lord Kimberley, perhaps not being moved by the

[1] No. 89.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 5 A.M., 6th March 1881.)

"NEWCASTLE, *5th March, noon.*

"I anticipate hearing from Joubert soon. Fear until Boers are defeated, leaders, if altogether excluded from amnesty, will continue hostilities if they can; but, on the other hand, the very unfavourable weather and their admitted certainty of eventual suppression may cause dispersion. Sir G. Colley was very averse to pardon leaders, and your telegram of 10th implies such cannot be granted. Instruct me fully on this point, for much will turn on it; and, reflecting on similar struggles in history, I do not attach much importance to punishing leaders, as did Sir G. Colley, though I would not recommend allowing them to remain in Transvaal, nor would I accept them as representatives of people. In discussing settlement of country, my constant endeavour shall be to carry out the spirit of your orders; but, considering the disasters we have sustained, I think the happiest result will be, that after accelerating successful action, which I hope to fight in about fourteen days, the

same motives for haste, replies on the night of the 6th March: "I will send further answer to yours of 5th as soon as possible,"[1]—that is, after the receipt of purport of Mr Kruger's reply on the 7th, and the decision of her Majesty's Government thereon had been taken the following day. Before, however, this telegram of the 6th March could be received, the Secretary of State for the Colonies is informed by further messages, dated the 6th March, that an eight days' armistice had been agreed to—"object of armistice to allow time for Kruger to reply to communications from the late Sir George Colley and subsequent

Boers should disperse without any guarantee, and then many now undoubtedly coerced will readily settle down.

"In any negotiations Joubert will probably make dispersion contingent on amnesty. I may be cut off from communicating with you, and if you wish to avoid further fighting, I suggest, while giving me no instructions for the future settlement, you should empower me, if absolutely necessary, to promise life and property, but not residence, to leaders. This I would not do, if dispersion could be effected without it. Consider whether you be disposed to give me names of proposed Commissioners for information of Boers, as such knowledge might have favourable effect. I sent 'Times' with debate on Ryland's motion to Swart Dirk Uys, leading Wakkerstroom rebels now on Laing's Nek. Mr Nelson arrived; left Potchefstroom on 19th February. Garrison on half, short of water (?) sometimes; after 15th March will have had tinned meat and mealies, but not firewood. Winsloe talked of firing off all ammunition before he surrendered. I hope to relieve them by end of month."

[1] No. 90.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

(Despatched from Colonial Office, 9 P.M., 6th March 1881.)

"If by my telegram of 10th you mean mine to Colley of 9th February, I never intended to imply that pardon could not be granted to leaders, but only to reserve that and other similar questions for decision of her Majesty's Government.

"I will send further answer to yours of 5th as soon as possible."

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communication with view to peaceable settlement of question."[1]

[1] No. 91.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 10.20 P.M., 6th March 1881.)

"MOUNT PROSPECT, *6th March*, 3.30 P.M.

"Have signed agreement with Joubert for suspension of hostilities till midnight, 14th March, for the purpose of receiving Kruger's reply and any further communications. We have power of sending eight days' supplies to our garrisons, and Joubert has undertaken to pass them through Boer lines, and on arrival of provisions at such garrisons, the blockading and besieging parties will cease hostilities for eight days. I hope you approve."

No. 92.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 1 P.M., 7th March 1881.)

"FORT AMIEL, *6th March*, 6 P.M.

"The following are the conditions of an armistice agreed to this day between Joubert and myself. Object of armistice to allow time for Kruger to reply to communications from the late Sir George Colley and subsequent communication with view to peaceable settlement of question. We mutually agree to cessation of hostilities from noon on 6th till midnight 14th March.

"Conditions: 1. In that period both promise not to make forward movement from present positions, but each retains liberty of movement within own lines.

"2. Sir Evelyn Wood is free to send eight days' provisions, but no ammunition, for all Transvaal garrisons, the Boer officers undertaking to pass it to such garrisons.

"3. Joubert undertakes to send notice of the armistice conditions to respective garrisons and to Boer commanders, and will use his influence to induce these commanders to allow withdrawal of the British wounded from these garrisons into Natal."

No. 93.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for War.

(Dated 6th March, 10 P.M. Received 7th March 1881.)

"FORT AMIEL, 10.30 P.M.

"Want of food prevents advance for about ten days. Ingogane and Incandu are impassable. I have therefore lost nothing in suspending hostilities, and gained eight days' food for garrisons most in want. Hope you and his Royal Highness approve."

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"History of the armistice."

The local telegrams which passed between Sir Evelyn Wood, President Brand, and Commandant-General Joubert, and which led up to the agreement for an armistice, together with the conditions of the latter, are given in the Appendix.[1] These papers are worth perusal, and, taken in conjunction with the telegrams already referred to, serve to illustrate still further the foregoing remarks.

The "whole history of armistice" is described by Sir Evelyn Wood in his telegram of the 14th March;[2] but it may be added that the meeting between Sir Evelyn Wood and Commandant-General Joubert, which led to the agreement, was virtually gained through the former offering to pass a telegram from Mr Brand to the latter. The President, in his message to Sir Evelyn Wood, dated 4th March, says: "I gladly avail myself of your Excellency's kind offer to send a telegram to Joubert, to ask him whether

[1] See Appendix O.

[2] No. 103.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

"12*th March*, 8 P.M.

"In order to enable me to answer questions in Parliament, inform me whether suggestion for armistice proceeded from you or Joubert, or from whom."

No. 106.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received at Colonial Office, 10.30 A.M., 14th March 1881.)

"MOUNT PROSPECT, 7.15 A.M., 14*th March*.

"13th March, whole history of armistice. 3d March, Brand appealed to me, as former friend of Boers, to stop bloodshed by arranging temporary cessation of hostilities. 4th March, sent my answer to you. 5th March, you approved. 3d March, Brand appealed to Joubert to meet me to arrange armistice. 4th March, Joubert sending me Brand's message, asks how far I will co-operate, so (*sic*) he wishes to stop his patrols. 5th March, I offered to meet him on 6th."

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he could not meet your Excellency and arrange some plan by which hostilities could be stopped for a certain fixed time, to offer facilities for peace negotiations."

Singular conditions of the armistice.

The armistice agreement contained some singular conditions, which, however fitted to secure a cessation of hostilities and further the peace negotiations on the spot, were unworkable, and but ill calculated to have been of any practical assistance in case hostilities had been resumed at the expiration of eight days. Although hostilities were suspended for that period on the Natal border between Sir Evelyn Wood and General Joubert from the moment they had signed the agreement, yet no such cessation followed the notification of the armistice to the British garrisons in the Transvaal. The "effusion of blood" was not attempted to be prevented in their cases![1] They were to await the arrival of the convoys sent from Natal, with eight days' provisions to each respectively, before the armistice of eight days took effect with them. The Commandant-General undertook to send notice of the conditions of the armistice at once to the respective garrisons. No intimation in writing or otherwise was sent from the British general; and so clumsily were the arrangements on this head carried out, that the officers commanding the British garrisons in the Transvaal were indebted solely to the Boer commandants, against whom they were fighting, for intelligence of the armistice and copies of its condi-

[1] See *ante*, p. 390, for telegram on this point from the Secretary of State for War.

tions. Naturally, coming in such a way and from such a source, they were received in a doubting spirit! In point of fact no practical benefit accrued from the permission accorded by the enemy to send provisions to these garrisons, as, with the exceptions of Wakkerstroom and Standerton, which were not in want of them, the waggons only reached their destinations after peace had been notified. Had circumstances arisen to have necessitated a resumption of hostilities at Laing's Nek on the 14th March—the date when the first armistice was to have expired—would not impediments, artificial or otherwise, have arisen to create further delay in the transit of the convoys, and have prevented their ever being delivered? As it was, that intended for Potchefstroom—the garrison which was the hardest pressed for food—which had been despatched from Mount Prospect, accompanied by an English officer, on the 7th March, had been so delayed by flooded rivers, bad roads, or other causes, that it had not reached Potchefstroom when the troops were quitting the town on the 23d March, two days after the capitulation.

The peace was, though, a foregone conclusion even at the time the armistice was agreed to!

Progress of peace negotiations.

Mr Kruger's answer to Sir George Colley's letter of the 21st February was at length received by Sir Evelyn Wood on the 7th March—the day following the signature of the armistice agreement by General Joubert and Sir Evelyn Wood. It was dated Heidelberg, 28th February, and would there-

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fore appear to have been an unusual time on the road.[1]

Then followed prolongations of the armistice—Mr Kruger's arrival being delayed until after the 14th, and the meetings with the Boer leaders becoming somewhat protracted—until the ratification of the preliminaries of peace, which took place on the 23d March.[2]

[1] No. 96.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 7.15 P.M., 7th March 1881.)

"NEWCASTLE, *7th March*, 2 P.M.

"Kruger's answer, dated Heidelberg, 28th, to Colley's of 21st, now received through Joubert. Gist as follows. In conjunction with members of Government here, have satisfaction to assure you that we are very grateful for the declaration, in the name of her Majesty's Government, that under certain conditions they are inclined to cease hostilities. It appears to us that, for the first time since unlucky annexation, there is chance of coming to peaceful settlement. Our hearts bleed over necessity of shedding more blood of burghers and soldiers. In our opinion, a meeting of representatives from both sides will probably lead speedily to satisfactory result, therefore suggest representatives from both sides should be present, with full powers to determine preliminaries of honourable peace, and ratify same."

No. 97.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

(Despatched from Colonial Office, 3.15 P.M., 8th March 1881.)

"*8th March.*

"With reference to your telegram of the 5th, her Majesty's Government would be ready in any settlement to grant complete amnesty to all, including leaders, excepting only persons who have committed or are directly responsible for acts contrary to rules of civilised warfare; make this known in such way as you consider most expedient. We should make no exception as to persons with whom we will negotiate, requiring only that they shall be duly authorised representatives of Boers, with power to act in their behalf. We understand Kruger's answer as opening way to further proceedings on basis of preceding communications; and we now propose to appoint Commissioners, whose names I will state at earliest moment, who will examine whole matter, and will be ready for friendly communications with any persons appointed by Boers."

[2] See Appendix O.

Sir Evelyn Wood, during the progress of the negotiations, seems to have been careful in his endeavours to avoid or smooth over apprehended difficulties, likely to create hesitation on the part of the Boer leaders.[1] How much so, indeed, may be seen from his telegrams of the 15th and 16th March, sent respectively prior to and immediately after his first meeting with Mr Kruger. For the better protection of the interests of native tribes on the borders of the Transvaal, it was at that time considered desirable that, before giving up the province, a tract of country eastward should be cut off. With this idea, Lord Kimberley, in his telegram of the 12th March, giving the names of the proposed Commissioners, and the points which they would have to consider, says: "It would be well also to consider scheme for severance of territory eastward, to divide Transvaal from Zulus and Swazis, retaining great native districts on the east and north-east."[2] By his telegram of the 15th March, Sir Evelyn Wood appears, in sending a copy (?) of Lord Kimberley's message of the 12th to Messrs Kruger and Joubert, to have deliberately omitted the above-quoted words, and supplied others less likely to cause alarm.[3] How well he succeeded in hiding from the Boer leaders the scheme proposed by Lord Kimberley may be further noticed, when, in his telegram of the 16th March, he uses these words: "I do not think they realise they may have to yield extensive tract to native tribes, and if they contemplated chance of Commission arranging this, they would not withdraw from the Nek."[4]

[1] See Appendix O. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

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Scheme for severance of territory fortunately abandoned.

The proposed severance of territory was subsequently, on the assembling of the Royal Commission appointed, quickly seen by two of its most experienced members to be thoroughly impracticable; and while calculated, if carried out, to create future discord and evil, to bring with it no compensating advantages to the native tribes in whose interest it was suggested. Lord Kimberley acquiesced in this view, and so fortunately no action was ultimately taken in that direction.

Sir E. Wood later—the night of the day on which peace had been finally settled—appears to have become uneasy as to how his words, "happiest results," &c., in his telegram of the 5th March, might be interpreted in England; but certainly—of course undesignedly—the explanation he offers on the 23d March does not tend to make their intended meaning any more clear. But, however obscure that part of the latter message may be, another is made perfectly intelligible. Apparently afraid that the fact of his having been instrumental in initiating and carrying through the negotiations may be overlooked, he is found without "false modesty" pointing out to the Secretary of State that the success gained in that direction was mainly due to his personal influence with the Boer leaders.[1]

[1] No. 6.—The Secretary of State for War to Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood, Natal.

"*23d March* 1881.

"All your military arrangements up to conclusion of peace negotiations approved. Pending final settlement under Commissioners' action,

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War passages interspersed in Sir Evelyn Wood's telegrams.

It is not necesary to say much respecting the interpolated war passages introduced by Sir Evelyn Wood in several of his telegraphic messages—even up to so late a date as the 16th March.[1] It is hard to understand how any one could have supposed that a British Government in the present day, after having been led to negotiate in the manner described in the correspondence published, could suddenly turn round, and, without sufficient cause, break off negotiations, thus justly giving rise to the impression that they had been entered into solely for purposes of bad faith.

If it was desirable to continue the hostilities, in

force now in Natal and Transvaal will not be reduced in strength, though reliefs may be made.

"Garrison at Cape will be strengthened by an additional battalion, and artillery ammunition column will be landed there to await orders.

"Telegraph any suggestions."

No. 5.—Sir Evelyn Wood to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

"*March* 23*d*, 11.30 P.M.

"Sincerely grateful to Government for appreciation of efforts in carrying out their wishes. Referring to words 'happiest results,' &c., in my telegram of 5th March, I meant that a series of actions fought by six companies could not affect our prestige, but Boer leaders had lit a fire which had got beyond their control, and would be quenched more easily after a British victory. The fire is now out for a time, but Kruger to-day stated the Republic would be ruined if the Commission admitted claims from all forced to aid Boers. In drafting instructions, therefore, the hitherto inert power of the loyalists must be treated as an important factor in the question of a lasting peace. It would be false modesty to conceal belief that personal acquaintance with me has materially aided solution. Uneducated men mistrust Governments, but trust person; therefore Roberts should go himself to Transvaal to get known by the people. The troops, other than those in the Transvaal, being recalled near base, but not from South Africa at present. And it is most important that the Commission should commence at once, being assisted as to boundary questions by a staff of engineers."

[1] See Appendix O.

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consequence "of the disasters we had sustained," why have strained every nerve to bring on the armistice, before the Boers had given any indication of their willingness to comply with Lord Kimberley's often reiterated demand, that they should first "desist from armed opposition"? The gain which might have been anticipated — though fallaciously — from sending a few days' provisions to Potchefstroom, could not be regarded as commensurate with that which would certainly have resulted to England through maintaining a more dignified attitude, and adopting a Fabian policy,—waiting until, our full reinforcements coming up, we should have become masters of the situation, and—in all probability without further bloodshed—have obliged the Boers to "desist from armed opposition," in the first instance, and then have dealt with the question of their future government in a way which, while satisfactory to them, would have been considered in no respect derogatory to us.

Such a delay would, however, have brought Sir Frederick Roberts upon the scene.[1]

The position of affairs as they actually were at the

[1] Colonel Sir Evelyn Wood, when he reached Natal with the earlier reinforcements and was made a local Brigadier-General, had over 200 senior to him on the list of colonels, but stood immediately before Sir George Colley. The advent of Sir Frederick Roberts, with other officers, would have placed Sir Evelyn fifth in seniority of the Natal and Transvaal forces; but, as soon as it was seen that Sir Frederick Roberts's services would not be wanted, Sir Evelyn had the local rank of Major-General conferred upon him. This selection placed him above Brigadier-Generals Drury-Lowe, Bellairs, &c. See Appendix Q.

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The situation is well stated by a "Quarterly Reviewer."

time, following the death of Sir George Colley, has been so well stated by a "Quarterly Reviewer," that we cannot do better than give his words :—

"We believe that the English public has never realised the actual situation at the moment when this astounding peace was signed. It is true, detachments of our troops had been worsted in three engagements, but in not one of them had more than 500 men actually come into action. Our garrisons still gallantly held their own in the Transvaal, and, with the exception of Potchefstroom, could have held out for many weeks to come. An army of about 10,000 men, well provided with artillery and with a considerable force of cavalry, were actually at Sir Evelyn Wood's disposal within striking distance of his enemy; while about 10,000 more, with a due proportion of the three arms—infantry, cavalry, and artillery, and thoroughly provided with all the appliances of war—had either actually landed in South Africa, or would shortly have done so. On the other hand, if we turn to the Boers, we find a very different picture: a force of undisciplined farmers, ill provided with tents or other means of shelter, without artillery, commissariat, transport suited for rapid movements, or medical appliances; whose total strength of citizens capable of bearing arms in the whole country only numbered 7326. Of these a large proportion were occupied by our garrisons, many were loyal to us, and, notwithstanding the pressure put on them, would not fight; while at least some members of every family were forced to remain at home to tend the flocks and herds and look after the farms. It may be said that, taking the most liberal estimate, and making full allowance for the recruits they received from the Orange Free State and disaffected Dutch farmers elsewhere, 3000 men were the outside number that could have been placed in line at one time. If the reports of the Boer leaders are in any way trustworthy, only a few hundred were present at each of the actions where our troops were worsted. It is

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well known now, that at the time of the armistice the force encamped on Laing's Nek, having been already in the field nearly two months in very severe weather, was suffering much, and could only with difficulty even then be kept together by its chiefs. Had our forces adopted the Fabian tactics of masterly inactivity, the Boers would either have been forced to attack our intrenched positions, with the certainty of defeat and great loss of life, or else the farmers would gradually have returned to their homes, and the Boer army would have melted away. According to Sir Evelyn Wood, the former alternative would have been adopted, and it had been decided to attack Mount Prospect on the first foggy morning, had not peace been concluded."[1]

Danger from an extension of the war—through the cause of the Transvaal Boers being more actively taken up by the Dutch population in Cape Colony, the Free State, and Natal—although not immediate, might have been apprehended ultimately; and—the war not being popular in England—expediency might have pointed to the desirability of bringing about a peace; but there were ways and ways of working towards such an end. In the circumstances in which we found ourselves placed, can it be said that the right way was taken to conclude an honourable and satisfactory peace to the English nation? An ordinary acquaintance with the Transvaal climate and Boer habits should surely have pointed to the fact that the season was at hand when the necessities of the farmers would require their removal with their stock to the bushveld. Then—full British reinforcements having reached the front—would have arrived

[1] See Quarterly Review for April 1883—"The Transvaal."

the time for offering to negotiate fair terms for making a lasting peace with honour. That time would have been coincident with the arrival of and conduct of affairs by Sir Frederick Roberts.

Decay of English influence throughout South Africa.

A peace so made was surely and naturally followed by the decay of English influence throughout South Africa, with its concomitant transfer to the Dutch party, which then quickly took the ascendant. How much so may be clearly seen in the Cape Colony, where—though but three years have since elapsed—the governing power has already passed from the hands of the English into those of the Dutch colonists.

The Africander Bond—Africa for the Africanders—a society owing its origin and rapidly extended organisation and influence to the errors committed by English authorities—the annexation and subsequent over-government of the Transvaal, the unnecessarily provoked war, and the hastily patched-up peace—has its ramifications throughout the several States and Colonies, and is steadily progressing towards the realisation of its programme. Step by step it will surely continue to do so, unless by change of policy, in time, improved feeling, and lessened race prejudice on our side, we undermine its *raison d'être*.[1] Outnumbering the English, the Cape Dutch colonists

[1] Thackeray likened the world to a looking-glass. If we have only sour looks for it, it will certainly reflect back our ill-humour. Can it be expected that our South-African Dutch colonists will like us, or be willing to join loyally with us, when we rarely have honest fair words to say for them?

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have the voting power to return both members for most of the electoral divisions of the Colony. Until recently, however, they have not cared to avail themselves of their strength; but fired by late events in the Transvaal, worked upon by the agencies of the Africander Bond, and stirred up by some of their better educated and more ambitious kith and kin, including their clergy, they have latterly taken great interest in political matters, and have combined to obtain the return of a compact majority to Parliament. Prior to the election which took place in the early part of this year, a meeting of Bondmen was held in each electoral division where the Bond held sway—and that was in the great majority—at which candidates were proposed for election, and every Bondman pledged himself to vote for the two chosen by the majority of the meeting. In this way their vote became unanimous, and no candidate, other than a Bondman so selected, had any chance of being returned for a constituency in which Boers predominated. And thus half of the seventy-four members of the present House of the Cape Parliament are Bondmen, having the power of framing the laws, and consequently governing the country, in the direction most consonant with their feelings and prejudices.

These political changes have no doubt been fraught with disadvantage to the Colony, inasmuch as the services of some of its most able, intelligent, and patriotic representatives have been lost, while men have been substituted who are comparatively ignorant and uncultured, though not perhaps without some

natural ability. The future legislation derived from such lawgivers—the stubborn Dutch landowners and farmers of the interior, who now reck little of English power to affect them — is not likely to be to the taste of Englishmen in England. Our great Missionary and Aborigines Protection Societies will probably soon have cause to bewail its retrograde character. But what will the British Government be able to do to assist them? But little. It is perhaps too late. The Dutch party have been almost hopelessly alienated, and we are not any longer in a position to be able usefully to dictate our wishes to them. Coercion is out of the question. It would mean a large army of occupation throughout the length and breadth of the vast interior of the country for an indefinite time.

No; the men we so unfortunately employed to look after imperial interests have—to adopt a simile conveyed by the nursery rhyme—turned out "Margery Daws," and have left us but an uncomfortable bed in South Africa. Nevertheless we must lie in it, and rest, perforce, content, though straw has been substituted for down. That Englishmen out at the Cape—that is, those who intend making their permanent home in that land—will soon find it to their interest to hold out the hand of fellowship and coalesce cordially with their Dutch neighbours we do not doubt; and so the English party — so lately the predominating one— will gradually dwindle away, wisely reconciled to accept accomplished facts. Already we see in the Cape Ministry an English Premier with English

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colleagues, working harmoniously with a Dutch majority.

And so, in due time,—as we remarked in our opening chapter,—it will come about that there will be a United South Africa, though scarcely of the nature fondly hoped for, and originally projected by the British Government, but rather one which will desire to run wholly alone, without interference from the Colonial Office, and thus, unless we alter our policy in time, not tending towards the greater consolidation of the British "Empire."[1]

Native question.

Considerable divergence of opinion exists in the several Colonies and States of South Africa, as well as in the mother country, as to the lines which a sound native policy should follow. Some go so far as to decry all laws which restrict the freedom of the natives, or place them in any way on an inequality with the European inhabitants. These people consist mainly of those who live far away from, or who have had no experience of, or nothing to fear from, the large hordes of savages overrunning other parts, threatening at any moment to overwhelm the few whites in their vicinity. They wholly disregard the

[1] No one whose name has been connected with South Africa ever strove harder, politically and socially, to soften mutual prejudices and asperities, and conciliate the feelings of the Dutch colonists to British rule, than that great administrator, Sir Bartle Frere, during his stay in the country—nobly assisted, as he always was, to their own complete sacrifice, by Lady Frere and his daughters. If the results did not equal his endeavours and intentions, the failure must be ascribed to his not having been allowed time and a free hand, and to the shortcomings of others, whose acts effaced the good he did.

natural law of self-preservation, which must necessarily be followed in all small communities, in the endeavour to keep in check the antagonistic elements which otherwise might arrest their progress, or even destroy their lives. Others, again, swayed by traditionary recollections of treachery and slaughter endured by their people at the hands of the natives, dread being placed in such a position as might possibly lead to a recurrence of similar disaster, and therefore incline to the enactment of laws which restrict the natives to certain localities, prevent their spreading over the land, and even tend to drive them across the borders of their State. Between such divergent views come many shades of opinions, often formed according to the experiences gained, and circumstances in which the holders have been situated.

Time only can soften race asperities, and bring about the adoption of a common humane native policy throughout South Africa. The surest safeguard against harsh legislation, and only secure guarantee against ill-treatment of the natives in such extensive sparsely populated countries, consists in the steady formation of a thoroughly healthy public feeling in their favour, and, radiating from the more civilised centres, being by degrees brought to bear on the outlying districts. As such a feeling spreads, promoted by the press and public discussion on native questions, Governments and peoples would come to clearly perceive that their own interests demanded the just and good treatment of the natives, and that mutual benefit must result from a recognition of this

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fact. This was set forth in a despatch written by Brigadier-General Bellairs on the 18th May 1881, when Administrator of the Transvaal. He said—

"If a common-sense view of the matter is taken, the question of native treatment and taxation in the Transvaal may be said to resolve itself almost into one of mutual interest, and is one which might therefore be advantageously used as a powerful engine to bring about a permanent better understanding between the Boers and natives. Give protection and equal justice to the natives, and they will be willing enough to pay their taxes. That being so, it would surely be a suicidal policy on the part of the Boers were they to act so as to jeopardise the collection of such an important item of revenue as the hut-tax, estimated to bring in this year £40,000, and an increasing amount in succeeding years.

"Much would be gained if the natives could be given to understand that the payment of these taxes bound the local Government to give them protection and ensure their receiving justice and good treatment at all hands; and again, if the Boers could be made rightly to comprehend that their own interests, the future stability of their Government, and the principal source of their revenue depend mainly on their treatment and behaviour towards the natives.

"Last year, when for a short time administering the Government of Natal, the following fact came under my notice, which well illustrates the feeling I have described as entertained by the natives with respect to the payment of taxes. A number of them obtained permission to remove into Zululand; but learning that the Government collected no hut-tax there, they hung back, saying that they were not willing to go where they could claim no protection from the Government, and where, in the absence of a hut-tax, there could be no security for themselves or their cattle.

"Taxation cheerfully submitted to is, it appears to me, the true way to introduce industrious and civilising habits

amongst the natives. In order to raise the required amount for payment, numbers of each tribe are annually sent away to work for the whites. Anything tending to interfere with the collection of native taxes would affect not only the revenue, but also the labour market."

It may be reasonably doubted if direct imperial intervention in the native affairs of South Africa—any more than was the case in New Zealand—has of late years proved so beneficial either to the natives or ourselves as to encourage us to persevere in such action. Past events indeed seem to point to the desirability, in the interests of all concerned—colonists, natives, and ourselves—of our abstaining in future from all direct interference in such matters, and that we should do wisely to leave to the several Governments the task of settling such questions—whether of native policy, boundaries, or trade routes—among themselves, equally as much as we have been in the habit of doing in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The peoples of South Africa—whether of Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State, or Transvaal—are capable of managing their own affairs sufficiently intelligently to be able to dispense with our further nursing. That blunders have been and will be committed by their Governments, and that occasional dead-locks will occur, may be taken as granted; but these will be got over as elsewhere—as, for instance, formerly, in the now united seven provinces of New Zealand, or the now amalgamated Dominion of Canada. Imperial interference has hitherto not worked well, and has satisfied none. While irritat-

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ing to South Africans generally—a race more than usually sensitive to dictation or intervention—it only tends to increased pressure being put upon the English Government, by certain home sections, to go further afield to exercise an active protectorate over native tribes in distant or more or less inaccessible regions.

No real permanent advantage is so gained to the natives, who, if not already, must ere long find themselves living alongside, or in the midst of a Boer population—the Boers, it should not be forgotten, being the most numerous and increasing class in the country—the true colonists, landowners, and farmers, pushing their way into the far interior. To exercise an inefficient protectorate—it is idle to suppose it could be more than nominal in such a vast territory, with the mass of the colonists resenting our interference — over native tribes would surely produce future, if not immediate, antagonism between them and the Boers, among whom their lot must eventually be cast. The latter would assuredly be provoked at what they would deem undue interference on our part, and the irritation so caused would be vented on the natives, thus tending to prevent any softening influences which might otherwise be brought indirectly to bear in their favour.

The native question has been at the root of most of our troubles in South Africa; and too often, from inability to look sufficiently ahead, our well-meant —though unfortunately mistaken — endeavours to

ameliorate the condition of the natives, have resulted in their being left in a worse position than previously. It is one which—seemingly from every point of view —we should do well to leave to be settled by the inhabitants of South Africa themselves, and thus, in the interests of all, free ourselves from the inevitable complications and entanglements which pursue us at every step taken in a contrary course.

Final reflections.

The main object sought by the imperial Government in their haste to bring about confederation, had been to lessen imperial responsibilities and expenditure, by obliging the Colonies and States, as a whole, to manage their own affairs and look to their own internal defence, without assistance from England—a policy which had met with the best results in other parts of the colonial empire. Already the Cape Colony had a responsible Government, and — Cape Town excepted—only employed a few imperial troops in the great native districts, on its eastern frontier; while Natal, with—virtually—a Crown colony Government, had a few more occupying its capital. The intention then was to withdraw these troops as soon as confederation had become an accomplished fact, leaving only sufficient in South Africa to defend the imperial naval station—the Cape peninsula. And already the military stores in those parts had been reduced to a minimum, barely sufficing for the daily requirements of the troops, without provision for possible future native or other troubles, so far as the imperial Government was concerned.

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Unfortunately for the achievement of this ideal, in place of allowing the Transvaal people time to arrange their own affairs, we—in 1877—took advantage of the difficulties they were in, and took away their liberties, thus obliging the despatch of a British force into the far interior, and bringing upon us fresh heavy responsibilities and expenditure. Native wars followed in rapid succession,—the Galeka and Gaika risings on the Cape eastern frontier; a native revolt in Griqualand West; Pondo and Basuto disturbances; hostilities in Zululand, and with Sekukuni's tribe in the Transvaal,—in which we found ourselves forced to take part, thus entailing further increased responsibilities and expenditure, and involving us in additional serious complications; while it has been computed that fully thirty thousand natives perished by battle or resultant disease.

The close of the Zulu war in 1879, offered a good opportunity to revert to original intentions, and withdraw all imperial troops but those required for the imperial naval station. Only, in that case, the Transvaal and Natal must have at once been given free institutions, and a different "settlement" have been made in Zululand. Perhaps even another neglected opportunity arose when the Transvaal passed out of our hands. Instead of leaving boundary, trade route, and native questions to be arranged, as they arose, by conferences between the Colonies and States concerned, only offering to arbitrate if called upon, we again, unfortunately for ourselves and for the native tribes in Bechuanaland,—perhaps also for the

Basutos,—intervened, and so burdened ourselves with yet more responsibilities.

It will be well if even now, too tardily, we recognise that our true course—the most beneficial for all, black or white, colonial or imperial—is to allow South Africans the complete control of their internal affairs, without any future active or direct interference on our part. The loyalty of Canada and New Zealand has not diminished, but the contrary, since British troops left those colonies; and a like result may be reasonably expected to follow a similar course of action, if taken in time, towards South Africa. Our influence in favour of the good treatment of the natives, far from being lessened, could then be indirectly exerted with more useful and permanently beneficial results than has lately been the case, or can be done now as matters stand. Then we might reasonably expect to reach an ideal expressed by the 'Cape Times': "What hope there would rise to us of orderly progress if only the common voice of South Africa should declare that henceforth no black man should be despoiled of his land or cattle, except in the way of just forfeiture incurred by his own offence; and that every effort in the way of freebooting, although beyond the border of any State, should be put down and sternly punished by the united action of all the States."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

Extract from Report of Captain Raaf, C.M.G., dated Potchefstroom, November 28, 1880.

"When Mr Kruger came, I proposed that Mr P. Cronjé, Bassin, Coetzee, and Bezuidenhout should meet the Colonial Secretary. After a deal of talking it was at last decided that they should meet him on the farm of one 'Laberschaup,' about twenty-four miles from Potchefstroom. They would not allow me to leave unless I would give a written document, a copy of which I enclose.

"I proposed Wednesday as the day of meeting, when two or three voices from the crowd said, 'That will be too late; on Wednesday we want to be in Potchefstroom.' Mr Paul Kruger told me that he had come from Rustenburg to meet these men, as he feared things were coming to a point, and he wished to prevent bloodshed if possible. He told me he had found the men in a great state of excitement, and they will not wait until the appointed time in January, as previously arranged. Therefore he had that morning decided to call a meeting of the whole committee. For absent members summonses had that morning been sent, and they are to meet as early as possible. I may state without any hesitation that it is no further use to attempt to reason with these men; they are fully determined to defy the Government in every way.

"I may further state, from very good authority, that the men I met at the place of meeting do not represent a third of the actual rebels under arms."

Report of Mr Hudson.

"Potchefstroom, *December* 1, 1880.

"Your Excellency,—Following my letters of the 26th and 28th ultimo, I have the honour to report that Potchefstroom is still in a disturbed state, and the inhabitants appear to view matters as critical. On Monday I left this at 8 A.M. for Kaalfontein to meet Mr Paul Kruger and Boer Committee. I took with me only a special constable named Ribas, who drove me. I may here mention that on Friday last Captain Raaf went out to notify, if he should desire it, my willingness to meet Mr Kruger, and was rather roughly handled, being met some distance from the laager, searched, and an attempt was made to lead him and his horse in. On his return he told me that he thought at one time they would have seized and kept him there, and he did not care to advise me to go out. I told him I must go according to arrangement.

"The Boer laager is about twenty miles from here. When about two miles from it an escort of two men met us and took us into camp, where I should say about 400 men were gathered. Ribas informs me he counted 618 horses and mules, but there were many more.

"I met with a very sullen reception, and Mr Paul Kruger appeared nervous, and very anxious that I should keep out of sight of the 'volk' (people) as much as possible. Mr Kruger then took me into a room, where a meeting between about ten persons and myself took place. The interview here began:—

"*Mr Kruger.* I hurried down from Rustenburg hearing that matters were serious, but I now find them more so than I expected. In fact, I don't know what to think of it. The Committee had been working with the people, and arrangements had been made for a meeting on the 9th of January 1881, and now the Government has upset the whole thing. I and others are now doing our best for a peaceful arrangement, but

if the Government precipitates matters I will wash my hands of all responsibility.

"*Mr Hudson.* I have come here to meet Mr Kruger with a like object, and I think I can claim to have the best interests of the country at heart. I am a colonist, and came up here in the hope that I might promote South African interests. I am equally anxious with Mr Kruger to assist in preventing any disturbance, and would strongly urge upon those for whom warrants are out to surrender and trust themselves to the mercy of the Government.

"*Mr Kruger.* Why, when the people are protesting, and a meeting notified for the 9th January, which the Committee are trying to make pass off peaceably, does the Government worry them by tax collecting, executions, &c.? The Government should have waited till then.

"*Mr Hudson.* Surely, Mr Kruger, you cannot suppose that any Government would consent to suspend the operation of the law because of some meeting that was supposed to be held. The law must take its course.

"*Mr Kruger.* The Government has precipitated matters, the people are impatient, and matters are now serious. Had the Government waited, the Committee would have laid before the people on the 9th of January Mr Gladstone's proposals, and have been prepared to have taken action on them, and matters peaceably arranged.

"*Mr Hudson.* The Government has received no information from the Committee of the object of the meeting, or any intimation that any proposals from Mr Gladstone had been received, or were to be discussed—at least I never heard of it.

"*Mr Kruger.* Everything has been published, so that every one might read what was going on, and so long as the people protested the Government should not harass them.

"*Mr Hudson.*—As I have said before, the Government cannot suspend any of its legitimate functions. As regards the collection of taxes, why should one pay and not another?—as a Government we are merely carrying out the laws of the country.

"*Mr Bodenstein.* Why should taxes not be allowed to be received under protest till this meeting?

"*Mr Hudson.* Because I never yet heard of a Government receiving taxes under a protest, such as you propose; it could not do so. It might lead you to entertain the idea that if the country were given back the money would have to be returned to you by the British Government.

"*Mr Kruger.* It is not the British Government, or the English people; it is acts of the Government and the misrepresentations of Sir Bartle Frere, Wolseley, and Lanyon that have brought matters to this state.

"*Mr Hudson.* I am not aware of any act of this Government which could justify the present defiance to law and order; and as to the alleged misrepresentations, I do not understand what is meant.

"*Mr Cronjé.* Are you aware of what took place between Bezuidenhout and the Landdrost of Potchefstroom, and all the circumstances which have led to the present difficulties?

"*Mr Hudson.* I am not aware of the particulars. The Government is under the impression that everything has been done according to law; if any injustice has been done to Mr Bezuidenhout, he has his redress by law, or a representation to Government. When I get back to Pretoria I will make inquiries—though, as I have intimated, he could appeal to a higher court.

"*Mr Cronjé.* I would like to state the case. Mr Bezuidenhout was served with a tax notice to pay £27, 5s. He appeared at the office of the Landdrost of Potchefstroom, and told him he was willing to pay £14, which was all that could legally be demanded. The Landdrost refused to receive it, but said Bezuidenhout must pay £27, 5s.; but he declined to do so. He was then summoned for £27, 5s., and appeared, presenting his last receipts, and tendered again £14. The Landdrost answered as before. Bezuidenhout flatly refused to pay. Subsequently judgment was given for £14, with £8 costs, and the waggon was attached for the £14. If this matter is looked into, it will be seen how illegally the Government has acted.

"*Mr Hudson.* The Government is not aware of the case as you have stated it, and I cannot say more than I have already said.

"*Mr Fonché.* Why did the Government adopt such an unusual course as to send troops down to execute the arrest?

"*Mr Hudson.* There was not a single soldier sent down or used to carry out the process of the law. Special constables only were used, and they were resisted.

"*Mr Bodenstein.* Why were no summonses issued in the usual way? Had that been done, the present difficulties would not have occurred; the troops coming down made the difficulty.

"*Mr Hudson.* I understand from Mr Cronjé that summonses were issued; but that is a judicial matter, and if any wrong has been done, it can be righted in the usual way. I have come to urge you to settle matters quietly, and hope you will urge upon those for whom warrants are out to give themselves up; these points are only personal ones.

"*Mr Kruger.* Why, while the people are protesting generally, do the Government try to stop them? The Committee were working for peace, and do not want bloodshed, and if the Government had allowed the people's Committee to act it might have been different. Even now the Government have arrested the printer, Mr Celliers, who published their protests; why did the Government do that? Matters have arrived at the state now that I do not know how much further they will go. (Here a member or person in the room said to Mr Kruger, 'Yes, you do, or else you know,' and put his hands round his neck, indicating, as I understood, that he would have a halter round his neck.)

"*Mr Hudson.* The Government has never interfered with the peaceful efforts or intentions of the Committee. Surely the Government has a right as much as private persons to take notice of defamatory articles. The courts and the laws of the country will decide whether Mr Celliers or the Government is right; so I don't see that any person can object to an appeal to them, if disposed to make it.

"*Mr Kruger.* The people are a protesting people, and should not be hindered in their words.

"*Mr Hudson.* Is there anything you wish me to convey to the Government?

"*Mr Kruger.* We must now speak to the people; it is their matter, and we can do nothing. I came to prevent bloodshed, and to shorten the time of the meeting, and wrote a letter to the Landdrost, with our minutes, which have not been forwarded.

"*Mr Hudson.* Will you let me have a copy?

"*Mr Kruger.* No, I cannot give you a copy. It is of no use; they are cancelled. The Government has taken its course, issued summonses, writs, and brought troops, and I must let the people now decide. We are now calling them up, and will determine what we will do; but if the Government interferes or does anything to exasperate them, I wash my hands of all responsibility.

"*Mr Hudson.* The Government is equally anxious with yourself for a satisfactory settlement of this matter. As you are calling the people up the matter will now soon be settled. I can say no more than to express my earnest hope that the decision you arrive at will be the right one.

"Here the interview ended.

"I was escorted back for about one mile from the laager by three mounted Boers.

"On Tuesday I received the enclosed letter from Mr Paul Kruger, to which I sent a reply. (Copy herewith).

"In conclusion, I would draw attention to the case of Bezuidenhout. I enclose copy of the proceedings supplied to me by the Landdrost, which I would recommend being sent to the Attorney-General for opinion.

"The political results which would appear to have arisen out of this case require, I think, that Government should investigate it.—I have, &c.,

"GEORGE HUDSON, *Colonial Secretary.*

"His Excellency, Sir OWEN LANYON,
K.C.M.G., C.B."

(See Blue-Book [c.—2783] of January 1881, No. 12.)

APPENDIX A*.

Mr Donald Currie, M.P., no less clearly perceived the rocks ahead, and as early as July 1878, indicated the steps necessary to avoid making shipwreck by the colonial policy pursued. (See Blue-book [c.—2866] April 1881, page 66.)

"3 AND 4 FENCHURCH STREET, LONDON, E.C.,
July 19, 1878.

"SIR,—Referring to the letter which I had the honour to address to you on the 10th instant, with regard to the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay, and to the interview which you favoured me with on the 15th instant, and bearing in mind what passed at your private meeting with the delegates yesterday, I now submit the following observations, as I promised to do, in the interest of the peace and prosperity of the Transvaal, and with the hope that they may be considered of some value to you in judging how her Majesty's Government will deal with the proposals of Messrs Kruger and Joubert.

"1. As matters stand, it would seem as if there were only two courses open—either to maintain British sovereignty, or to yield to the claims of the delegates for independence. But if you incline to seek for some arrangement fitted to reconcile the Boers, a third course may be found.

"2. From all I can see, after long interviews with Messrs Kruger and Joubert, and inquiries which I have made, it appears to be extremely probable that an absolute and unconditional refusal of the memorial from the inhabitants of the late South African Republic will be followed by scenes of disorder, and possibly of bloodshed: and further, that the country will be disorganised, as many people will *trek* out of the territory; that there will be difficulty in collecting taxes; settlers and intending emigrants may be alarmed; commercial relations disturbed, and all progress hindered for many a day to come in the Transvaal; consequently, that we may have to look for great financial embarrassments, both for the people and for our Government, in the revenue and expenditure.

"3. The Boers are so persuaded of the injustice of the course which has been pursued (whether rightly or wrongly); they have so strong a disposition to freedom and liberty of movement; they are so religiously, or, as some would call it, superstitiously mindful of facts in their past history,—that they will sacrifice their property and risk their lives, as they have often done before, for their convictions, and what they deem to be their just rights.

"It seems to me to be of the utmost importance to the Queen's Government to prevent any outbreak in the Transvaal, and not to allow it to be said throughout the world that we were dealing both with questionable justice and undue severity.

"More than this, it is easy to calculate that our hold over the Transvaal would hardly be worth the high price of English life and treasure.

"4. The third course to which I have referred is involved in the question: Can you give the people of the Transvaal what will satisfy them, in the shape of self-government and management of their own affairs, with some assurance of assistance in the future?

"I think you can. They ask for independence, which you indicated clearly would be refused; but I believe they would gladly promise, if free, to come into close and intimate relations with our Government. This, however, would not be judged sufficient by you, for I take it you mean to hold to British sovereignty. Nor could this course be adopted, in view of the inquiry why this country had taken the Transvaal over, and then apparently, because of admitted wrong-doing, had given it up. Care has to be taken of the arguments which might be employed if her Majesty's Government considered it wise to think of adopting the memorial. I call your special attention to the Queen's Speech in proroguing Parliament in August last; what Lord Carnarvon stated in the House of Lords on the 9th of August, and the speech of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in the House of Commons on the 7th of August, in answer to Mr Courtney.

"5. I venture to throw out the suggestion, that if our Government, after reading its own accounts from the Transvaal, and hearing from Sir Bartle Frere, and after judging what the delegates have laid before them, see any propriety in taking under review what conditions might be made for the future, advantageous to this country and to the people of the Transvaal, the following or some such arrangement might be considered as fitted to secure British interests in South Africa, and to satisfy the desires and opinions of the Boers. In some way it will be necessary to provide for the government of the country, if it be decided to give them, as nearly as possible, what they want.

"First of all, her Majesty the Queen should be accepted cordially by the Transvaal Boers as the supreme head; the people to elect their own representatives, the imperial Government to nominate members, and the Parliament to appoint its own Chief Administrator (the delegates would like a President), under a constitution framed with the approval of her Majesty's Government. It might also be arranged by convention, or treaty, that the Transvaal should not engage in foreign war, or in any dealings with the native races considered to be objectionable by the Queen's Government; and it might be made a condition that the Transvaal should form part of a South African Confederation, over which the Queen's Lord High Commissioner should preside, this Confederation directing and controlling all matters of general interest to the South African community.

"I go even further, and think it might be arranged that the administrator, or chief authority of the Transvaal, might be appointed with the Queen's approval; but in any case the country should be in strict alliance with England, and under its protectorate.

"If this could be arranged (that is to say, in the event of the refusal to the memorial from the Transvaal, and of risk of trouble there), then I think the Boers might be induced, by tact and management, to fall in with some such arrangement as I have indicated; for they could be made to feel that we wished them to be our brethren, and not under subjection,

which they violently denounce, as they say that they have had no voice in the settlement of their destiny.

"I need hardly assure you, sir, with your knowledge of South Africa, that very much depends upon your retaining the sympathy and affection of the Transvaal Boers; for whether they are to be under the Crown of England, or under some such arrangement as I have indicated, or altogether independent, or forced, in their judgment, to go away to other districts of the continent, it is of very great consequence for the future of South Africa that they should be contented and friendly.

"It would be easy to stir up angry feelings in their recollection of what the Boers have always considered to have been injurious treatment at the hands of persons who held official positions; but instead of antipathies and discord, we might, by good and kindly dealing, secure their strong attachment to this country, and in time clear away prejudices which prevail amongst them owing to our action with regard to the diamond-fields and our dealings in the previous history of the Transvaal and Free State.

"At present the population is largely composed of the Boers; but many Englishmen hold land there, and the country would soon be settled to a considerable extent if fair prospects of peace and goodwill existed.

"And there is one very important condition which might, with perfect fairness, be included in the constitution—viz., that at any time a majority in the country should have the power to decide upon annexation to England. The Boers have a strong conviction of the justice of a decision by a majority, and they would recognise, I believe, some such arrangement, just as they would now accept the decision to be annexed to England if *a majority* of qualified voters could be found in the Transvaal willing to vote for the maintenance of the present condition of things.

"The delegates speak in the strongest terms of the overwhelming majority which they say has declared in favour of independence, and of their adherence to the principle that a majority should decide.

"I ought to add, that while they have discussed with me,

and I have sought to learn their views, they are not responsible for the foregoing statements and suggestions.

"At the same time, I do not hesitate to say that in some degree the delegates have expressed a readiness to arrive with you at an amicable understanding.—I have, &c.,

"DONALD CURRIE.

"The Right Honourable
Sir MICHAEL E. HICKS-BEACH, Bart., M.P.,
&c. &c. &c.
Secretary of State for the Colonies."

APPENDIX B.

Extract from Mr WHITE'S Speech in the Legislative Assembly, November 29, 1880.—(See Blue-Book [c.—2783] of January 1881, No. 13.)

"I stand here this evening to move the resolution which stands in my name on the notice paper,—a resolution which I consider it is the duty of every one who is loyal in this House to support, and give to it the best support they possibly can. It will be hardly necessary for me to bring to the notice of the House the present state of this country. It is known to all and every one in it; and I think that I should have been wanting in my duty if I did not come forward, and to the best of my ability, show some of the causes that have led to this state of things. Many here present are not aware, perhaps, of the state of the country prior to the annexation; but I lived here some time prior to that event, and feel assured from my experience that the form of government which then existed could not possibly continue. It was a form of government which was split up into sections, where the law, as it is now, was set at defiance, and each man collected around him a party, and endeavoured to rule the State according to his ideas. The end of this state of things was a collapse, financially, and then it became the duty of her Majesty's Government, for the preservation of the other States

of South Africa, to take possession of this country. I am here to-night, not only to defend that act of annexation, but also to ask this House to endeavour to secure, for those who were then annexed, the rights and privileges which they were then promised. (Applause from the gallery. *The President.* Order! If any applause comes from the gallery I shall have to clear the House.) So far as I am personally concerned, I seek not the applause of the gallery, but I seek the votes of this House, and that I may fulfil that which the Government relied on—fulfil to the utmost extent the duties of that loyalty and that integrity which gave me a place in this House. If I am disappointed with this House, I at least shall go away knowing that to the best of my ability I have endeavoured to fulfil the trust reposed in me. The annexation came; and at the time of that annexation there existed in this province a Parliament called the Volksraad. That Volksraad was an elective institution. It was elected by the voices of the people; and the promises conveyed in this proclamation secured, by the word of her Majesty's representative, by the honour of Great Britain, to the inhabitants a similar elective assembly. Some period after the annexation the present form of government was given to us. That form of government is the closest form of government that can possibly exist. It is a Legislative Assembly, true, but it is a Legislative Assembly in which the influence of the Crown predominates. For if the nominee members who have been selected by his Excellency, her Majesty's representative, were unanimous in their opinions, they have neither the power nor the ability to enforce their opinions. If such be the elective assembly that was promised us by the annexation proclamation, then my knowledge of English is but limited; because it is clearly set forth in a clause which states that savages and barbarians—natives, I think, they are called—shall not have the right of voting; and clearly by inference it shows that the inhabitants who are not natives, and have the right to vote, should have the right of electing members to represent them. This has not been given by her Majesty; and until that right is given, and until every man in this pro-

vince has the privilege of exercising that right, so long will this State continue in the same condition in which it at present is. There can be no doubt that those who have come into the State, and those intelligent people who were residents in the State, fully expected by the wording of this proclamation that her Majesty would grant us an elective assembly; but up to the present, either the feelings of the inhabitants of this State have been misunderstood, or they have failed to reach the ears of her Majesty. That boon which was promised has not been granted. Now the first part of my resolution reads thus: 'That the Government of this province, as at present constituted, has failed to secure the confidence or support of its inhabitants.' I take it that if Government has the confidence of the people, the inhabitants of that country are not constantly resisting it; and if the inhabitants of the country are not now resisting the Government, then it is hard to know what resistance means. At the same time, I may say that those who at present are taking up the position that they have, have neither my sympathy nor my support. I consider that there are other ways in which that freedom of which they talk may be attained. Sir, there is a constitutional way of attaining those rights for which they long; but to take up arms at the instigation of some, who studiously keep themselves in the background (hear, hear), is not the way to obtain that freedom which they ask for. With those instigators and wire-pullers I have not the slightest sympathy; and I trust that the law will so far assert itself that these men may be brought to justice. If any men in this State are deserving of punishment it is those who incite others, not daring to come to the front themselves. Therefore I trust that any remarks which I make will not be construed into sympathy with those men, because I have no sympathy with them. But the fact remains the same—the fact of the country being in the state it is—that the Government does not possess the confidence of the people. And to-night I am not speaking on behalf of those in arms against her Majesty, but on behalf of those who have shown their loyalty to the Crown on more than one occasion. I am

speaking for those who feel that the rights promised them have not been granted, and it is on their behalf that I thought proper, as a member of this House, to place this motion upon record. The House, as at present constituted, sits here but to register the decrees of the Government; it is a farce to call it an assembly—a Legislative Assembly. If the Government had thought proper to rule this country without a Legislative Assembly it would have been much better; because then the responsibility of their acts would be fixed on the Government, and this House would not have become, as it is vulgarly termed, a 'buffer' between the Government and the people. This House is powerless to do good, but it is powerful to do harm, because the acts of the Government go forth to the people, registered by the vote of this House as the acts of the people, when such is not the case. Since the annexation the country has gradually, but surely, got into a worse state. It is true the Government point to the one fact, that the revenue has been paid, and under that fact they shield themselves, and say that the country is prosperous; but the country never can be prosperous—never will be prosperous—until those who are capable have some voice in the government of the same. It can never be—it has never been—that a country can progress under the present form of government. Years ago I emigrated, and I have seen the Cape Colony rise from a form of government as close as this gradually to representative institutions, and eventually to that state of representative institutions which is known as Responsible Government. I am not claiming to-night for the people of this country responsible government; but claim for them the right of being represented in this House, that they, at least in some way, may influence the Government in the path it may pursue. And I am only asking on their behalf that the House to-night endorse, by its vote, the resolution which stands in my name, and then I trust that her Majesty, ascertaining the truth and the facts, and knowing the wishes of the people, will be prepared to grant that which we now ask. I ask this House to take a retrospective view of what has taken place since the annexation. I ask it to consider again

all those who are now hostile to the Government and in arms against it; and I ask this House if any attempt has been made to grant to them that to which they consider themselves entitled. I say not the slightest attempt has been made—not the slightest attempt will be made, until this House moves in the matter; and I feel sure that the intelligence, the education, and the wealth of the province asks that the House will endorse this resolution. It appears that the difficulty with which the Government had to contend, relative to granting these representative institutions which the people ask, is that the majority are hostile to the Government. If such be the argument, then the sooner we are placed under that law—the martial law—the better. Do not let us be fooled with a bauble. Do not let us think we have a Legislative Assembly when we have nothing of the kind. Let us simply return to the form of government in which the representative of her Majesty does as he likes; not amenable to any one here, amenable only to those who placed him in the position of governor; but if we are to have the Assembly a Legislative Assembly, let us have it not only in name, but let us have it in reality, — here the people are enabled to make their voices heard, where they are by the voices of their representatives enabled to compel a Government to listen to them, where these representatives are responsible to the people who elect them, and not as at present constituted, where they are responsible only to themselves. I shall therefore, now, sir, with the permission of this House, move this resolution which stands in my name; and that I may not leave the Government in the slightest doubt as to my meaning, I say—as a member of this House—as a member who has been appointed to this House by her Majesty, that I should have been wanting in loyalty, and should have been wanting in integrity, if I did not boldly come forward and say that this resolution conveys to this Government the wish of the people. (Applause from the gallery—suppressed.) But it may be said that in the present circumstances representative institutions cannot be granted; but the representative institutions which can be granted will strengthen the Government and not im-

pede its good works at all; for I feel sure that there are sufficient people in this State to return members to this House as jealous of the liberties of the people, as jealous of the honour of Great Britain, as the present Legislative Assembly. Yes, sir, it is possible that representative institutions may be granted to this State which would strengthen the Government; but if the Government do not want to part with that power which they at present possess, it is but for us loyal subjects to submit—it is not for us with arms to defy the sovereignty of Great Britain. But there is a course left open if this House does not see fit to endorse the resolution in my name—a course open to the people, and which has been followed on many occasions—by an address to the Throne, to ask for the boon promised them. Let not this House think for one moment that with the rejection of these resolutions the matter is set at rest. (Applause from the gallery—suppressed.) There is a feeling abroad among those who claim to be loyal, and who claim to be true to her Majesty, that representative institutions they will have; and whether this House to-night votes for the resolution, or whether it does not, it is not a question that they will be called upon to finally decide. If I felt assured that some of the hon. gentlemen who are generally so dumb (laughter) would stand up to-night in this Assembly and attempt to controvert what I have said, I should be extremely obliged to them: I should be so obliged that I would almost thank them for doing it. Of course I am aware that the mouthpiece of the Government in this House will come with special pleading and attempt to controvert what has been stated; and I trust if the hon. member does attempt such a line of argument, that I shall be enabled fairly to meet him and fairly to beat him. (Applause from the gallery.) I do not wish for one moment that this should degenerate into my having made a motion, and having made a speech. That I do not wish, but that those who think differently from me will stand up and speak out their opinions to-night. If wrong, it is easy to controvert what has been stated; but if right, then they at least must admit the correctness of my statement. It has been my lot since

becoming a member of this House to stand here alone, battling for what I consider right, looking and hoping for assistance from those around me; but I have looked and hoped in vain. I have simply been forced into the position of the Opposition, —alone. I may be alone in my opinions in this House, but I represent the opinions of a great many of those who feel that the promises made have not been fulfilled; that her Majesty's Government has failed to carry out, either in letter or spirit, the proclamation it made when it annexed this country, except perhaps that we have an additional judge to the court which we had prior to the annexation. And when that court was created, it was also provided there should be three judges; and we rested satisfied so long with one, accepting the appointment as an earnest that the promise would be fulfilled which the Government was bound to fulfil, because that court was in existence prior to this proclamation. It was a law of the last Volksraad that sat in this House, and it was one of those steps which were made in the right direction. But this Government thought proper to keep us with one judge, and subsequently to give another, and I say that this Government has no right to keep that other judge from us which we are entitled to by the laws of this State. From the voluminous notes which have been made by honourable gentlemen in this House, I feel quite sure that they are about to attempt a refutation of what has been said. It really will be quite a novelty, quite an unusual thing, to hear the voices of some gentlemen in this House, let them be for or against me. I should prefer that they adopt the same views that I have presented, because I think that those views, if carried out, would be beneficial to the Government of this province. But if these honourable gentlemen think that the resolution which stands in my name will not be beneficial to this province, then I shall only be too happy to hear what they have to say. And if one of those members who sits in this House by the right of his official position will get up and traverse what has been said, I shall be extremely grateful to him, and much pleased that I have at least unearthed him. Relying that one of those honourable gentlemen will get up and con-

trovert what has been said, I shall reserve any further remarks that I have to make until I have the right and privilege of reply. (Applause.)"

APPENDIX C.

From Colonel W. BELLAIRS, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the DEPUTY ADJUTANT-GENERAL, Pietermaritzburg.

"PRETORIA, *December* 17, 1880.

"SIR,—1. I herewith enclose a Government notice, dated 14th, but only issued on the 16th instant, forbidding armed bodies to approach towns. This notice was published consequent on representations I had made on the subject, verbally, a fortnight since; and in writing—copy enclosed—on the 11th instant. I have drawn attention to this notice in a district order of the 16th instant, copy enclosed.

"2. The post-cart, which arrived yesterday from Potchefstroom, brought no reports either from the Special Commissioner (Major Clarke, R.A.), or the officer commanding the troops.

"3. The Boer camp has been moved from Paarde Kraal, a few miles nearer to Pretoria, and their patrols and scouts are encountered by our spies and scouts to within twenty-five miles of this.

"4. The telegraph line was broken between this and Heidelberg on the night of the 15th. Two mounted sappers, Royal Engineers, were sent out yesterday to ascertain the locality and cause of interruption, and endeavour to repair it.

"5. The headquarters of the 94th Foot are said to be detained at the Oliphant river, about ten miles this side of Middleburg, and not likely to be able to cross until this day. Having been informed that there was an intention of despatching 500 Boers in that direction, I sent out a mounted messenger on the night of the 15th, to warn Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther to take all precautions on his march, and more particularly when reaching the Botha Hill range and defile,

directing him to send forward his native followers, &c., to reconnoitre over the hills before advancing.

"6. Another report which reached me was to the effect that 500 men had left, or would leave, in the Wakkerstroom direction. If correct, this would seem to indicate an intention to attack or harass the company, 94th, leaving Wakkerstroom probably about 17th instant for Standerton.

"W. Bellairs, Colonel,
Commanding Transvaal District."

(Enclosure 1.)

From Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the Administrator, Transvaal.

"Pretoria, *December* 11, 1880.

"1. I transmit herewith an extract from a report made by the officer commanding Rustenburg, 9th December 1880, from which your Excellency will perceive that armed bodies of malcontent Boers are appearing in the vicinity of the camp at that station.

"2. Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea, commanding the garrison at Pretoria, also informs me that an armed party of six men last night approached within challenging distance of a sentry at the camp.

"3. As it seems to me very undesirable that unauthorised armed bodies should be allowed to approach the towns or military stations with impunity in this manner, I beg to recommend, for your Excellency's consideration, the expediency of issuing a Government notice to the effect that any unauthorised armed men approaching a town or military camp will be liable to be fired upon if coming within cannon or rifle range.

"4. The officer commanding the garrison of Pretoria has directed military mounted patrols to patrol the neighbourhood of the camp and town, with a view to preventing the approach of any such armed men, or of arresting them.

"W. Bellairs, Colonel,
Commanding Transvaal District."

(Enclosure 2.)

GOVERNMENT NOTICE, No. 264, 1880.

"As the advent of any armed body of men to the towns of this province would be dangerous for many reasons, being strictly illegal, and might imperil the public peace, and bearing in mind the difficulty of controlling such armed bodies, his Excellency the Administrator directs it to be notified that all armed bodies of men are forbidden to approach within a mile of, or to enter, any town in the province.

"By his Excellency's command,

"GEORGE HUDSON, *Colonial Secretary.*"

"COLONIAL SECRETARIAT, TRANSVAAL,
December 14, 1880."

(Enclosure 3.)

DISTRICT ORDER.

"PRETORIA, *December* 16, 1880.

"Attention is drawn to the Government Notice, No. 264, published in the Gazette Extraordinary of yesterday, prohibiting the approach of any armed persons within one mile of any town of this province.

"Officers commanding stations will be guided accordingly, and having due regard to their orders never to endanger the safety of their posts through overweakening their garrisons. They will endeavour to carry out the spirit of the instructions conveyed in the notice, and prevent such approach of any unauthorised hostile armed body of men.

"By Order,

"M. CHURCHILL, Capt., *D. A. A.-G.*"

(Enclosure 4.)

DISTRICT ORDER.

"PRETORIA, *December* 17, 1880.

"During the present disturbed state of the country seventy

rounds of ammunition will be carried by each soldier; and whenever likely to become hotly engaged, and conveyance for the regimental reserve not at hand, thirty rounds extra will be issued and carried on the person of each man.

"By Order,

"M. CHURCHILL, Capt., *D. A. A.-G.*"

APPENDIX D.

Mrs Smith's good deeds afterwards formed the theme of a District Order, published by Colonel Bellairs:—

"PRETORIA, *April* 5, 1881.

"The Colonel commanding desires to thank Mrs Marion Smith, widow of the bandmaster, 94th Foot, for the good service she rendered after the Bronkhorst Spruit affair in nursing the wounded. Mrs Smith was herself present in the midst of the action, but though surrounded by the dead and dying, she in the most courageous way immediately set about alleviating the sufferings of the wounded, and for upwards of three months continued to be unremitting in attending upon them under very trying circumstances. Such true female heroism and devotion merits recognition and high praise. Colonel Bellairs, therefore, takes the opportunity of Mrs Smith returning to England to publicly refer to the good acts she has performed."

And after her arrival in England the silver medal and diploma of the Order of St John of Jerusalem were conferred upon her, being presented at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in presence of her father, Captain Murray, a retired quartermaster, the Mayor of the town, and others.

Mrs Smith's elder child had his forehead slightly grazed by a bullet during the action; and Mrs Smith herself did not wholly escape, small fragments of lead, from bullets coming

into contact with the iron-work of the waggon, having cut her lip and ear.

Mrs Fox, and likewise Mrs Maistre, the wife of the orderly-room sergeant, afterwards received the Royal Red Cross.

APPENDIX E.

Two orders of the day were published at the time by Colonel Bellairs, remarking on the causes which had led to this disaster and defeat, and pointing out the necessity for taking precautions against similar abuse of a flag of truce.

"PRETORIA, *December* 28, 1884.

"The surprise by the enemy, and capture after heavy losses, of a body of troops, 267 of all ranks, under Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther, 94th Foot, took place on the 20th inst. near Modder's Spruit, about thirty-seven miles from Pretoria, on the road from Middelburg.

"From the reports received, this lamentable result would appear to have been brought about by the absence of caution on the march and neglect of orders received. Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther seems to have been deluded into a feeling of security through false information, no doubt purposely given him on the road, and to have entertained up to the last the impression, notwithstanding he had been warned from headquarters to expect attack, that there was no occasion for the special precautions ordered.

"Further neglect is shown in the fact that the ammunition ran short, each soldier having been supplied with only thirty rounds; whilst the lids of the ammunition-boxes had not been even unscrewed in readiness to meet emergency.

"Through the ground not having been reconnoitred before advancing, the rebels were enabled to appear suddenly within 300 yards of the troops and the train of waggons with them; and then, while a flag of truce was sent forward and Lieut.-

Colonel Anstruther was engaged in reading the letter delivered, each man improved his position and selected cover. An accurate fire was then opened by the rebels, and our officers and sergeants, no doubt having been previously marked, fell, together with more than half the men. All fought with great gallantry and endurance, and would still have stood to their posts, but that the commanding officer, seeing the uselessness of prolonging resistance, gave the order to cease firing, and give in."

"PRETORIA, *December* 28, 1880.

"The conduct of the rebel force which, under a flag of truce, advanced to attack the 94th detachment, under Lieut.-Colonel Anstruther, on the 20th instant, calls for special instructions, in order to guard against such cunning but savage design being again carried out.

"No hostile armed body of men will, under any circumstances, be allowed to approach the position of troops, or when on the march, within 1000 yards. Any such body attempting to advance under cover of a flag of truce will be fired upon. A flag of truce will only be received when sent forward with an unarmed man, and provided no advantage is taken meanwhile by armed bodies to approach."

APPENDIX F.

From Colonel W. BELLAIRS, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the DEPUTY ADJUTANT-GENERAL, Pietermaritzburg.

"PRETORIA, *December* 21, 1880.

"1. The military situation in the Transvaal is very critical. Large reinforcements are urgently necessary—especially cavalry.

"2. There must be 6000 or 7000 rebels in the field, who, under good leadership, exhibit courage, discipline, and organisation.

"3. The Potchefstroom civil affair brought about a mass meeting of the Boers a month earlier than it had been called for originally, resulting in hostilities commencing before the troops on the march, as reinforcements from Natal and Lydenburg, could reach Pretoria. The South African Republic having been proclaimed, Heidelberg was held in force, and large bodies despatched to invest Potchefstroom, and attack headquarters and two companies of the 94th Foot on the march from Lydenburg.

"4. One company 58th and one of 94th left Newcastle for Standerton on the 14th; and one company 94th Wesselstroom for Standerton, probably on the 17th. Nothing further is known here about these troops. I sent a written and verbal message to Standerton to prevent three companies of the 94th moving on to Pretoria, but I am unable to say whether either troops or message reached Standerton.

"5. Captain Lambart, 2/21st Foot, who was returning from the Orange Free State with horses, was captured and taken to Heidelberg. There had been no means of communicating with him previously.

"6. A report—copy enclosed—has been received from the officer commanding at Potchefstroom, giving result of a day's action (16th) at that station. The troops had originally about 300 rounds of ammunition per man, and 200 rounds per gun. Boer reports since say that Major Clarke, R.A. (Civil Commissioner), had surrendered the public offices.

"7. This day (21st) at 4 A.M., a disastrous report was brought in by Conductor Egerton, Commissariat and Transport Department, and a sergeant 94th (both wounded), giving accounts — copy enclosed — of the headquarters and two companies of the 94th having been surprised about thirty-seven miles from Pretoria, and every officer and man killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. I have sent off ambulances to render assistance, under Surgeon-Major Comerford and a civilian surgeon.

"8. I had taken the precaution of sending a special messenger previously to meet the officer commanding 94th, warning him that he might expect attack, and to exercise great

caution on the march to guard against surprise or sudden attack. I fear that there must have been culpable negligence in these particulars.

"9. A few hours before the arrival of this terrible intelligence, I had sent out a force, under Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, 2/21st, with the double object of obtaining forage from a farmhouse, and to prove of assistance, in case required, when the 94th should reach the most dangerous part of the road, about sixteen miles from Pretoria.

"10. The force in Pretoria had been too weak to adventure a field column, going to either Heidelberg or Potchefstroom; but on the arrival of the 94th companies, it had been arranged by me for a column at once to take the field.

"11. This is now out of the question. I can only hold the camp position, and with the assistance of volunteers, protect the townspeople. Pretoria will probably be soon invested by 5000 or 6000 men.

"12. Having sufficient supplies, I expect to be able to hold out until communication with Natal can be reopened, through the arrival of reinforcements."

APPENDIX G.

Administrator Sir W. Owen Lanyon, K.C.M.G., C.B., to the Right Hon. the Earl of Kimberley.

"Pretoria, *January* 23, 1881.

"Since I last addressed your lordship in my despatch of the 12th December, I have been unable to communicate on account of the action taken by the hostile Boers in stopping the roads and destroying the telegraph line. In that despatch I informed your lordship that the date for the mass meeting had been postponed from the 8th to the 18th December; but it appears that the date was afterwards again altered [illegible] to the 8th. As was the case concerning former meetings, [illegible]

this instance it was almost impossible to obtain the services of reliable men to go to the camp in order to afford information to the Government regarding the proceedings of the Boers. Some, however, were procured for this purpose, but they were very soon discovered, and had to fly from the camp. Even the scouts and messengers who were stationed at the houses of friendly farmers and others around had also to withdraw, as these people were afraid to harbour them on account of the threats used by the Boers. I append a copy of a report received from one of the men employed by Major Clarke for this purpose. The names were left out in it, as the document might have fallen into the hands of the Boers in transit.

"One of the first acts of the meeting was to call together such members of their old Volksraad as were present. The result of their deliberations was that they should proceed to Heidelberg and there proclaim the Republic. The date of this was Monday the 13th December. Messrs Paul Kruger, M. W. Pretorius, and P. J. Joubert were appointed as a triumvirate by the people then assembled. Dr Jorissen and Mr Bok (Hollanders) were made respectively State Attorney and State Secretary. A proclamation was drawn up restoring the old form of government. Thereupon an armed force of about 800 men were sent to Potchefstroom to get this proclamation printed. Verbal information was received here on the 16th of the fact of this body having arrived there just as the mail was leaving, but their intention was not known. What subsequently transpired will be seen from the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Winsloe, 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers, who is in command there. On the 15th the Boer camp was suddenly removed from Paarde Kraal to Heidelberg, where the proclamation was read, and the flag of the old Republic hoisted on the afternoon of the 16th. Report from the Landdrost's clerk appended. Prior to this the Boers had taken steps to destroy the telegraph, as will be seen from the reports of the Line Inspector and Lieutenant Littledale, R.E. All the roads were stopped, and the country patrolled by strong bodies of armed men.

"On the night of the 17th, a messenger (Mr Hendrik

Schoeman) arrived in Pretoria from the Boer camp at Heidelberg, bearing a letter to the Government covering the proclamation which had been issued by the triumvirate declaring the re-establishment of the Republic. Translations of these documents are appended. I need hardly comment upon the assertion contained in this proclamation, for the inaccuracy of many of them has been repeatedly shown in previous despatches. With regard to their assertion that the Government had broken faith with them in reference to what had transpired between Mr Kruger and the Colonial Secretary, I append a letter from Mr Hudson disproving their statements. But the course adopted by the Government in this case was precisely similar to that of Sir Theophilus Shepstone and Sir Garnet Wolseley with regard to former meetings, so it is impossible for the triumvirate to allege that there was anything unusual or likely to incite the people in it.

"In reply to this a proclamation was issued by the Government, which was forwarded by their messenger (Mr Schoeman) to the triumvirate. Meanwhile the Boers had, without waiting for a reply to their communication, taken steps to intercept and destroy a body of her Majesty's troops on the march from Lydenburg to Pretoria. At my request, on the 23d November, seeing that affairs were beginning to assume a more serious aspect, Colonel Bellairs directed a concentration of troops in Pretoria, in accordance with the orders left by Sir Garnet Wolseley. This was done in anticipation of the meeting which had been convened for the 15th January, as at that time the Boers had not decided upon calling it for an earlier period. This order was received at Lydenburg on the 27th. The troops, 250 in number, only left, however, on the 5th December, the cause of delay being the want of transport. In regard to this matter, and as to the military arrangements and due precautions which were taken, I beg to refer your lordship to the despatch written by Colonel Bellairs, the officer commanding the troops in the Transvaal. But it is hardly possible to conceive why the officer in command should have delayed his march so long, when ordered on urgent and temporary service, in order to obtain a large train of 34 ox-

waggons (which each carry from 4000 to 5000 lb. weight) for so small a body of men. Seeing that the position of affairs was daily becoming more serious, and on hearing that a large body of Boers had moved out of their camp in a northerly direction, Colonel Bellairs wrote again to the officer commanding the 94th, urging him to press on, and warning him that he might expect to be attacked on the road, and impressing upon him the necessity for careful scouting. This letter was received and acknowledged by him on the 17th December. On Monday, the 20th, he was surprised by the Boers, in number about 1500, when the band was playing and the men spread over a line about half a mile long. The enemy sent in a message with a white flag to order the colonel to halt and proceed no further. Whilst this was being done the enemy continued to advance under cover of the white flag, and so took up the positions which from a previous reconnoitre of the ground they had selected as being most suitable to pour in a deadly fire on our men. On the receipt of the reply that their orders could not be complied with, a murderous fire was immediately opened upon our men from about 200 yards off, with such effect that in a short time 57 were killed and 101 officers, men, and women wounded. Seeing this, and that all his officers had been killed or wounded, Colonel Anstruther, who was himself badly wounded in five places, but had nevertheless continued to command his men with a determined bravery and cool courage which cannot be too highly spoken of, gave the order to cease fire. Thus everything belonging to the headquarters of the 94th fell into the hands of the enemy, save the colours, which were hid away by the escort and afterwards brought into Pretoria, where they now are wrapped up in the colours of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. A considerable number of rifles, ammunition, and other stores were also lost. The news of the disaster was only received here at 4 A.M. on Tuesday, the 21st December, as the Boers would not give a horse to Conductor Egerton (who came in with the news), nor even allow him to use his own to ride in for the medical assistance which was so urgently required. In other respects, however, the Boers appear to have behaved

better than could have been expected to our wounded after the action, though that it was hardly what would be looked for from a civilised enemy will be apparent from the appended extracts from Surgeon-Major Comerford's report. On the receipt of this intelligence, and bearing in mind what had transpired in other parts of the province, the executive considered that martial law should be declared in order to strengthen the hands of the Government to check agitation in our midst (for there are many Boers in the town), and so ensure the public safety. Previous to this time some of the inhabitants of the town had come forward loyally to aid the Government in case any attack should have been made on it, but these in reality only represented about one-third of those who were capable of bearing arms. I regret to have to state that in some instances the young men of the town were prevented from following the dictates of their loyalty by their employers, who feared to lose some of their Boer customers should it become known that their *employés* had joined the volunteers. Others held back from motives of false prudence, or from a dislike to be under military control, in which, possibly, their juniors in rank and position might be placed over them on account of their being trained and more fit. The fact that such hung back in a time of emergency was most distasteful and irritating to those who had, on the first sign of danger, enrolled themselves. Thrice at public meetings did those assembled ask the Government to proclaim martial law, but I did not then consider it desirable to adopt so strong a measure. But when disaster had overtaken a body of her Majesty's troops within thirty-five miles of the seat of Government, and when the capital itself was threatened by an armed body of men flushed with success, it was high time to take stringent steps to oblige the waverers and trimmers to declare themselves, and to show that the interests of public safety were paramount to personal gain.

"And further, it will be observed that the Boers themselves had proclaimed martial law in their proclamation of the 16th instant. Accordingly, martial law was proclaimed on the 21st instant throughout the province. Prior to this, preparations

had already been made for the defence of the town itself; but bearing in mind the increased numbers of the rebels, and the increased confidence and strength resulting from the success of their attack upon the 94th, it was judged by the military authorities that a more concentrated form of defence was advisable. The town is very open and scattered, and it would have been impossible to guard it from any sudden raid with the limited numbers at the disposal of the military. It would also have been impossible to prevent communication with the enemy on the part of the disloyal citizens save by strict surveillance; and further, there would have been great danger to the women and children in the event of a street fight. Arrangements were therefore made for the reception of the townspeople in the camp, jail, and convent, in quarters and under canvas. They moved into laager on the 22d. Copy of the instructions to the officer commanding the troops regarding martial law is herewith appended.[1] On the 23d December a letter (copy appended) was received from the inhabitants of Heidelberg, stating that Mr Piet Joubert had summoned them before him and made certain statements regarding the action of the Government which were misleading and false. A perusal of this letter will show that these allegations were intended to bring odium on the Government and to incite the people. The appended copy was therefore sent to the writers. It has since transpired that they were not free agents in sending it, and that it was prompted by Mr Joubert simply to try to discredit the Government in the eyes of the people, and to obtain sympathy in their cause from the public generally, knowing full well that we could not publish a reply to it at the time, nor do anything to contradict it. No reply has been received to this letter; but notwithstanding that the triumvirate were in possession of our reply, and knew that the statements were false, they reiterated the charges in a more public and general manner in a second proclamation, which they shortly afterwards published. In reply to these misstatements the Government published on the

[1] These instructions—undated—were not issued to Colonel Bellairs until the 6th January.

1st instant a memorandum recapitulating what had occurred, refuting the charges made, and explaining generally the action taken by the Government.

"Since that date the enemy have gradually been approaching the town and cutting off all communication and supplies. Those who were well disposed towards the Government, but who were unable to leave their farms on account of the rapid and unexpected course of events, have received harsh treatment and been heavily indented upon for supplies. Even the German missionaries have been so treated, and their superintendent, Mr Merensky, made a prisoner. In many cases people have been forced to join the rebel camp and bear arms.

"The unfortunate natives have suffered most from this outbreak because of their loyalty to her Majesty. Numerous instances have been reported in which they have been wantonly shot down. They have been forced to work in the camps, and their property and cattle taken to supply the commissariat of men who had large flocks and herds of their own to draw upon. Were anything needed to show the necessity of her Majesty's rule over the Transvaal, it would be found in the reign of terror which exists and the sufferings which have been imposed upon these unfortunate natives.

"Several engagements have taken place in the immediate vicinity of Pretoria, in all of which our forces have been successful. In one, however, on Pienaars river, about thirteen miles from here, our loss was heavy in consequence of the treacherous conduct of the Boers. Twice during that action were the troops deliberately fired upon after the white flag had been raised: the men hearing the 'cease firing' sound, and seeing the white flag raised, left their cover, and were immediately fired upon, and thus several were killed and many wounded. Colonel Gildea, R.S.F., who commanded, had a very narrow escape when moving forward with his orderly, both bearing white flags easily discernible, in response to what they supposed was an appeal for peace. A volley was fired at them from the laager, which was only sixty yards off. I append copy of the district order published by Colonel Bellairs, commanding troops, on this subject.

"It is distressing to have to report such acts of a white foe, more especially that in all our former wars even the natives have ever respected the use of the white flag. The troops and volunteers have behaved well, and according to last reports, received through native sources, all the forts are safe, though some have been repeatedly attacked by large bodies of Boers. On the 21st instant a messenger came in with news of reinforcements being on their way. I need hardly say how grateful was this intelligence to us all here. We have nearly 5000 men, women, and children in a very confined space, but owing to the excellent arrangements made by Colonel Bellairs, everything is far better than could have been anticipated, and the health of all is good. The people are cheerful and as contented as is possible in the circumstances. I have no fears for the safety of the position, or of the pluck and determination of the forces to hold it.

"In a separate despatch I will refer to the causes which led to this sudden outbreak, and show how unanticipated it was, even by the people themselves. That it was the result of a sudden impulse there can be little doubt.

"An opportunity for sending this despatch has only very lately occurred, and I have been obliged, therefore, rather hurriedly to finish it. A report has reached me that the Boers have stated officially that we have lost heavily in our engagements. Since the engagement on the 20th December we have not lost an officer. Other details will be found in Colonel Bellairs's despatch to the Secretary of State for War."

From Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Pietermaritzburg.

"Pretoria, *January* 22, 1881.

"I have the honour to report for the information of the Major-General commanding: It having at first been determined to defend the town of Pretoria by arming and organising its male inhabitants, certain houses and positions had been selected for defence, and some labour expended in throwing up works.

"The intelligence of the loss of the headquarter detachment of the 94th Regiment coming in, however, on the 21st of December, with the knowledge that the rebel Boers had mustered in large force at Heidelberg, Potchefstroom, and elsewhere, and had displayed unexpected organisation, leadership, and daring, caused me, after consultation with his Excellency the Administrator, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, commanding the garrison, and Major le Mesurier, D.O.R.E., to come to the conclusion that the town could not be successfully defended by the townspeople, of whom about 250 had at that time come forward as volunteers, and many of whom, being connected by ties with the rebels, were believed to be more or less lukewarm in loyalty to the Government.

"Owing to this latter cause, the more numerous loyal inhabitants had held meetings, and asked for the proclamation of martial law, so as to oblige all to bear arms and to overawe waverers. This was not acceded to at once; but concurrently with the decision arrived at to withdraw from the town, the necessity for the proclamation became unavoidable.

"Martial law was therefore decided upon by his Excellency in Council. The inhabitants, however, still wished to remain in and defend the town.

"Finding this to be the case, accompanied by his Excellency the Administrator, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, and Major le Mesurier, who had some days before been placed in charge of the volunteers and town defences, I proceeded, on the morning of the 21st December, to the market-square, where volunteers and townspeople were assembled. These were addressed by myself, Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, and Major le Mesurier; the military necessity for drawing in the lines of defence was pointed out, and the evacuation of the town ordered to be effected. The suddenness of the order, together with the proclamation of martial law following on the spot, took the people by surprise; but they speedily acquiesced in the decision arrived at by the military authorities, and cheerfully set to work to carry out the removal of their families to the camp position.

"The following day, 22d December, about 3700 men, women, and children removed from comfortable houses to

the scanty and crowded accommodation of the camp. All day long this mass was streaming backwards and forwards, carrying the household goods they required; but by nightfall nearly all had shelter of some sort under tents, waggons, or huts, which the soldiers had vacated for them. Subsequently, some more huts, which had been building, have been completed, and other shelters erected. Order was gradually introduced into this heterogeneous community through the supervision of gentlemen appointed to act as ward-masters, quartermasters, sanitary inspectors, superintendents of water-supply, cattle-pound assistants, &c., to the Commissariat and Royal Engineer Department. Others capable of bearing arms were enrolled in the volunteer corps—viz., about 170 mounted and 450 foot, and employed in increasing and strengthening the defences. Towards arming these men, all the available rifles, Martini-Henri, Westley-Richards, Snider, Whitworth, Werndel, &c. &c., remaining in the imperial or colonial stores, were issued.

"Supplies of provisions remaining in the merchant's stores in the town were taken possession of by the Commissariat Department, also all arms and munitions of war by the Ordnance Store Department, additional storage accommodation being built to receive them; the materials for which had also to be removed from the town. Horses, cattle, forage, &c., were similarly seized for military purposes from all around, compensation being guaranteed in all cases.

"While all this was going on, the defences were being rapidly pushed forward. A covered fort, for twenty-five men and a Krupp gun (4-pounder), was constructed on the heights, on either side of the South Poort, and afterwards a block-house for twelve men immediately guarding the South Poort entrance. Fort Royal, for a company of infantry and a 4-pounder Krupp gun, about 700 yards to the east of the camp, commanded the entrances to the town on that side. Loretto House (commonly called the Convent), a Roman Catholic educational establishment, and the civil jail, in the yard of which were placed about forty families, 680 yards to the north-east of the camp, were joined together, placed in a state of defence, and occupied

by about 450 foot volunteers, with a 4-pounder Krupp gun placed in the south-east bastion of the jail wall.

"To the west, where the cattle laager was situated, the intrenched magazine, recently abandoned, was utilised as a picket station, and a block-house was built to the north-west for twenty men.

"The camp, or inner line of defence, consisted of several squares, taking in the store buildings, soldiers' huts, married quarters, officers' mess, stables, &c., all loopholed, and placed in a state of defence, with shelter-sheds around for the men to sleep in and be at their respective posts.

"As may be readily understood, the work of suddenly improvising accommodation for such a large increase to the camp, laying in food, forage, fuel, &c., for an anticipated investment of long duration, largely adding to the defences of the place, and at the same time making reconnaissances and attacks on the enemy's position around, was a source of great and constant anxiety to those charged with carrying out the necessary arrangements, and attended with great toil to all, whether soldiers or civilians.

"The conduct of the inhabitants throughout all these troubles has been such as to call forth special commendation. Gentlemen, no matter what their rank and position, have cheerfully accepted the duties assigned to them. A judge has become a ward-master, and serves out bread and meat; a Wesleyan chaplain acts most energetically as chief sanitary inspector; a mayor as chief ward-master; members of the Government and Executive Council give their services when required on picket duty; and two or three of them, from their special knowledge of the country, are found most useful with the reconnoitring parties sent out. Others—barristers, attorneys, merchants, bankers, surveyors, &c., find themselves in the ranks with volunteers. All work with a will, with a very few exceptions; and among these latter, I regret to have to place the civil medical practitioners, four in number.

"These gentlemen thought proper, after working satisfactorily for four weeks in the medical posts assigned to them, to send in a 'round-robin,' demanding not less than five

guineas a-day for their services; and on this not being conceded, but pay at one guinea a-day, with rations, being sanctioned (the rate paid to the English civil surgeons during the Zulu war), they sent in their resignation. The conduct of one was the more reprehensible as he is a Government official—a district surgeon.

"The behaviour of her Majesty's troops has been excellent, but little of the ordinary crime existing, and desertion having ceased—the latter fact, notwithstanding that the rebels in a crafty manner tried to tempt the soldiers to quit their colours, through having given liberty to those privates they had taken prisoners, passing them across the border into the Orange Free State.

"Martial law has at present been carried on without occasion for severity. Although the town has been almost wholly abandoned, property has been respected, with minor exceptions, at first of fruit, &c., being stolen; but the punishments inflicted on those thus found offending soon arrested this evil. Many of the female portion of the inhabitants are in the habit of spending the day at their houses, and waggons go backwards and forwards for their convenience.

"Frequent reconnaissances in force have been made. Despatches, referring to those in which the enemy was encountered, are sent separately.

"As regards the out-stations, all the forts are believed to be still holding out successfully, though, from indirect sources, I learn that they have been invested and attacked.

"At Potchefstroom there would appear to have been much fighting, with heavy losses to the rebels, causing them to adopt the sitting-down and starving-out tactics. At Rustenburg the rebels are said to be endeavouring to work up to the fort by sap, but had lost many men. At Lydenburg the rebels are said to have retired into the village, after having failed in an attack; and then, having incautiously left their horses out to graze, the soldiers sallied forth and shot three Boers, and between thirty and forty horses.

"Marabastadt had not been directly attacked up to the 12th inst.

"Throughout I have experienced the most cordial co-operation from Sir Owen Lanyon, and I feel greatly indebted to his Excellency for the uniform support he has given me."

APPENDIX H.

District Orders by Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B.

"Pretoria, *January* 5, 1881.

"It appearing that some of the inhabitants of Pretoria have not given their services for the defence of the place, but still remain in the town, the Deputy Provost-Marshal is instructed to cause a register, in such form as he considers desirable, to be kept of all such persons. Accordingly, to effect this, all such persons, white and coloured, are required to appear before the Landdrost, for the purpose of being registered, between the hours of 9 and 12 o'clock A.M. to-morrow. Any person neglecting to appear will be arrested, and all will be placed under the surveillance of the Deputy Provost-Marshal, and will be guided by the orders given to them by that officer. Inhabitants remaining in the town are warned that they do so at their own risk and on their own responsibility,—that the town may, under certain contingencies, be shelled or blown up; and further, that any remaining in it will not hereafter be received into the camp, or otherwise provided for. They will also understand that, should they be found holding correspondence with, or giving intelligence to the enemy, or in any way assisting, harbouring, or protecting a rebel, or committing any other offence provided for by the Army Discipline Act, they will be rigorously dealt with."

"Pretoria, *February* 23, 1881.

"As many of the inhabitants, under various pretences and causes—some with certificates of illness—have lately left the lines of defence for the purpose of residing in the town, notwithstanding the warning conveyed by District Order published

on the 5th ultimo, the Colonel commanding, having regard to the great risk such persons are running, desires again to caution all so acting that the danger from attack has by no means passed by; and that, in the event of the town being attacked and entered by the rebels, they may find themselves placed between two fires, exposed to explosions of various kinds, and should they, in the dark and confusion of an alarm, attempt to regain the camp, received with volleys from our own people. Wherever rebels appear they will be fired upon, and the fact of men, women, or children being in any part of the town held by them, will in no way prevent a fire being opened on that part from this place."

APPENDIX I.

District Orders by Colonel Bellairs, C.B.

"Pretoria, *January* 1, 1881.

"No. 1. The action taken by the rebels in cutting off communication around, and preventing supplies reaching Pretoria, and in purloining Government and private horses, cattle, and supplies on their way to that town, has necessitated the commandeering or seizing of horses, cattle, and supplies in the interest of the public service, and to meet the requirements of the inhabitants and troops of Pretoria. In all cases where this has been done, compensation will be made for the same hereafter to all owners who can prove themselves to have been loyal subjects during the present civil war.

"The fact, however, of such commandeering being necessary for the public service, will in no way justify any individual, military or civilian, in seizing or appropriating to his own use anything on private premises, even though such premises may have been abandoned; and no destruction or damage to private premises will be allowed at any time, unless it be necessary for the purpose of defence.

"Attention is called to the provisions of the 6th section of the Army Discipline Act, to which all are now, under martial law, subject; and the Deputy Provost-Marshal and officers generally will be careful to arrest any individual committing an infraction of the same, viz.:—

"'6. Every person subject to military law who commits any of the following offences—that is to say:

"'(1.) Leaves his commanding officer to go in search of plunder;' or

"'(6.) Commits any offence against the property or person of any inhabitant of, or resident in, the country in which he is serving;' or

"'(6.) Breaks into any house or other place in search of plunder, shall, on conviction by court-martial, if he commits any such offence on active service, be liable to suffer death, or such less punishment as is in this Act mentioned.'"

"PRETORIA, *January* 3, 1881.

"Horses which have been commandeered from private individuals for the public service will, if desired, be returned to the owners at the close of hostilities.

"Such horses, to avoid permanent disfigurement, will be only branded on the hoof, but will be valued the same as others, and compensation granted in case of loss while in public employment.

"Owners desirous that this arrangement should be carried out, should at once notify their wishes in writing, describing their horses, to the Garrison Adjutant."

"PRETORIA, *January* 3, 1881.

"Complaints have reached the ears of the Colonel commanding, of depredations having been committed on the properties of inhabitants since they removed from this town; and that volunteers and others, under pretence that they were acting under authority, have demanded from servants left in charge of private premises, and taken for their own use, articles of produce, poultry, &c.

"Colonel Bellairs trusts that any inhabitants who have so suffered will endeavour to identify such marauders, and lodge complaints against them to the Deputy Provost-Marshal, when, on sufficient proof, the offenders will be rigorously dealt with."

APPENDIX K.

From Colonel W. BELLAIRS, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the DEPUTY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL, Pietermaritzburg.

"PRETORIA, *January* 31, 1881.

"1. I have the honour to report, for the information of the Major-General commanding, in continuance of my despatch of the 22d instant, that since that date, no direct communication has been received from Natal, or any of the military posts in the Transvaal, with the exception of that at Rustenburg.

"2. I enclose a copy of a report made by Captain Auchinleck, 2/21st Foot, commanding at Rustenburg, giving a diary of events in the defence of the fort between the 24th December and 20th January, together with my observations on the same attached.

"3. Indirectly, from natives, I hear that the rebel force investing the fort at Potchefstroom having been weakened, and the Boers having attempted to capture the town magazine, about 300 yards from the fort, a mine was sprung upon them, and in the panic which ensued, the garrison sallied forth with the guns, resulting in a loss to the rebels of sixty or seventy killed, waggons destroyed and oxen captured.

"4. The experience of this war hitherto would seem to show that, however formidable the Boers may be on horseback, in consequence of our want of a sufficient force of cavalry, they can never encounter us with any chance of success on foot.

"5. The wisdom of evacuating the town of Pretoria, and drawing in the line of defence, has been abundantly proved.

This step has, no doubt, hitherto prevented any real attack of this place, and the probability, otherwise, of the town falling into the hands of the enemy. From information received from indirect sources, it would seem that our action in these particulars took the rebels by surprise, as they had anticipated and hoped that, through some of the townspeople sympathising with them, and others being anxious to keep well with both sides and save their property, the town would have been ill defended, and would, like Potchefstroom, have fallen an easy prey to them.

"6. The defences of Pretoria have been further improved. A small mounted torpedo corps has been organised, consisting of mounted sappers, together with mounted volunteers and natives who are well acquainted with the surrounding country. The forts are provided with improvised hand-grenades, and certain spots about the town and elsewhere mined. Blue-lights, mounted on poles with reflectors, are also in readiness, as means of discovering the near approach of the enemy on dark nights. The system of signalling between the forts, and with columns sent exterior to the place—by means of the heliograph and flags by day, and flashing lamps by night—has been rendered very perfect, and has been of great assistance and saving of labour.

"7. The season has been, and continues, unusually wet. This has, no doubt, had the advantage of causing the atmosphere to be cooler and the camp healthier than might have been the case in ordinary years. The horse-sickness disease has also probably, from this cause, been postponed, though its ravages may not be deferred much longer. In consequence of the want of horses, mules are being trained for the use of the native scouts.

"8. The manufacture of *biltong* (dried beef), hay, and cow-dung fuel proceeds daily.

"9. Surgeon Ward and civil surgeon Crow still remain at Modder Spruit with the wounded of the 94th Foot. No direct communication has been received from them, but indirectly I learn that the men left to attend on the sixty-two wounded have most of them been sent to Heidelberg, and that

medicine sent from here had been appropriated for the rebel wounded at Zwart Koppie, and was not forwarded on. I, however, caused a fresh supply to be despatched, but have not been able to hear whether it reached or not."

APPENDIX L.

From Colonel W. BELLAIRS, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the DEPUTY ADJUTANT-GENERAL, Pietermaritzburg.

"PRETORIA, *February* 6, 1881.

"1. In continuation of my despatch of the 31st ultimo, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Major-General commanding, that the strength of the rebel force investing Pretoria is believed, from reconnaissances made, to have been recently reduced—probably from all available men having been withdrawn to increase the force understood to be collecting on the Vaal to arrest the progress of the troops coming from Natal. The large force previously at Heidelberg has similarly been reduced.

"2. It is difficult to estimate the numbers in the different positions held, as they are constantly varying, through a system of frequent reliefs being carried out. The following may, however, be considered the present approximate numbers of waggons and men occupying the defensive laagers in this neighbourhood, viz.:—

"(1.) *Elandsfontein*, ten miles west of Pretoria, about twelve waggons in a deep and precipitous ravine, surrounded by stone sconces, some of which are on the summit of a rather high hill, part of the Daas-Poort range. A strong position, with about one hundred Boers, but who can be reinforced to double that number from a camp a little farther westward, the precise situation of which has not been properly ascertained.

"(2.) *Albertus Pretorius's Farm,* where the six-mile spruit runs through the range south of Pretoria, fifteen miles west by south of Pretoria. A strong position, and very difficult of approach; was at one time a large laager, but now has twenty to thirty waggons, with about the same number of men, and a good many women and children.

"(3.) *Red House, Erasmus Erasmus's Place,* eleven miles south by west of Pretoria, and three miles west of main road to Heidelberg, consists of a brick house, with a stone kraal to the left, and a laager of fifteen waggons. It is situated on the top of a slope; visible from every side; can be easily approached, and is commanded by higher ground to the south; is not a strong position—the country being comparatively open around when approaching it from the north. About one hundred and fifty Boers are stationed here; but this number can be readily increased from the laager at Strydon's Farm, three or four miles to the eastward.

"(4.) *Strydon's Farm,* on road to Heidelberg, twelve to fourteen miles south of Pretoria. Not sufficient information as to its exact position; but the country being open, it is not probably a strong position. About two hundred Boers.

"(5.) *Daniel Erasmus's Farm,* on six-mile spruit, eleven miles south-east of Pretoria, and one mile to westward of direct road to Standerton. Twenty to thirty waggons in a rather strong position under a hill, one mile east of the farmhouse, on left bank of the stream, along which the ground is very marshy. About one hundred Boers.

"(6.) *Struben's Farm,* one and a half miles to south-west of house, eleven miles east of Pretoria. A small laager, with twenty to thirty men in a very strong position.

"(7.) *Swavel Poort,* five miles east by south of last. A very strong position in a rugged and precipitous

ravine, with about eighty to one hundred Boers. Number of waggons unknown.

"(8.) *Venten's Farm*, about fourteen miles north-east of Pretoria, near junction of spruit from Grays with Pienaars river. A women's laager, with forty to fifty waggons, and perhaps the same number of fighting men. Particulars as to position and strength not fully ascertained.

"(9.) *Derde Poort*, nine miles east by north of Pretoria. A small laager at the foot of a hill in the Magaliesberg range, with only a few men.

"(10.) *Wonderboom Poort*, six miles north of Pretoria, with laager of about twenty waggons on right bank of Aapies river, under a hill three miles north of the Poort, on Hans Fourie's Farm. The Poort and neck to the east form a naturally strong position, and is further defended by stone walls and sconces. About two hundred Boers.

"3. The above completes the circle. The laagers are so placed as to afford support to each other in case of attack—signal-fires being lighted to give notice of any enemy approaching. The last reconnaissance made set in motion about six hundred Boers towards the point of danger. In addition to the numbers given above, the rebels have with them their farm natives, on whom they can rely, and utilise them to patrol and guard their waggons. They also oblige the men of adjoining Kafir kraals to labour for them in erecting defences, &c.

"The localities of the waggon laagers are frequently changed, and invariably after an attack on the position.

"I enclose a sketch-map, showing the different positions made by Mr Melvill, the Surveyor-General, who, as head of the Intelligence Branch, I have found has been of great assistance to me.

"4. The accompanying further intelligence, to the 30th ultimo, has been received from Captain Auchinleck, 2/21st Foot, showing that all was going on well at Rustenburg Fort to that date.

"No present anxiety need be entertained for the garrisons at the different posts as regards provisions, sufficient supplies having been laid in before hostilities commenced to enable them to hold out for long periods.

"A native report has come in to the effect that an English force of about four hundred men, coming from the Orange Free State, had reached Potchefstroom about the 23d ultimo. As a band is represented as accompanying the troops, I conjecture that, if true, it must be the headquarter wing of the 58th Regiment; and that, having effected the relief of the fort, the whole force then returned through the Orange Free State to Natal or Standerton.

"The despatch and receipt of messages is rendered very difficult from the preventive measures carried out by the rebels. From information received from time to time, there is reason to believe that suspected natives are frequently stripped, and their clothes burnt, and that when any letter is discovered death is inflicted.

"The scarcity of officers of the regular forces, present and fit for duty, has been at all times during this war a serious embarrassment to contend against, and has caused increased anxiety to those responsible for the efficient carrying out of operations in the field, and for the safety of the extended lines of defence of this place. This want of officers has, I am inclined to think, led to some casualties which their supervision might have prevented."

APPENDIX M.

Administrator Sir W. Owen Lanyon, K.C.M.G., C.B., to the Right Hon. the Earl of Kimberley. (Received May 10, 1881. Extract.)

"Pretoria, *March* 18, 1881.

". . . In my former despatch I was only able briefly to refer to the steps which had been taken to prevent the

capital from falling into the hands of the enemy. On the 21st December, martial law was proclaimed, and in twenty-four hours the whole population of the town was in laager,—*i.e.*, within fortified cantonments,—and being provided for under military control. When the following return of the civil population is considered, some idea may be formed of the difficulties to be contended with in so promptly carrying out these arrangements:—

"Europeans—	
Men, ...	975
Women, ...	676
Children, ...	718
	2369
Servants, natives, &c., ...	1331
	3700

"The officer commanding the Transvaal (Colonel Bellairs, C.B.) cheerfully undertook all the arrangements, and I cannot speak too highly of the prompt and efficient way in which they were carried out. All the provisions, forage, horses, and cattle were taken over by the military authorities, and every one was put on soldier's rations. In a population so well to do as is that of Pretoria, it can easily be imagined that such restrictions as to diet must be very hard to bear.

"It cannot be supposed that hardships are not being incurred, or that there is no consequent grumbling on the part of those who, by force of circumstances, have to submit to extreme discomfort, and even privation. Such is a natural consequence when the public safety is so far threatened as to necessitate the supersession of civil rights by martial law. But generally the people make the best of their troubles, and it is surprising to me how bravely and stoically they bear them. The conduct of the women merits unqualified admiration, for they have the additional anxiety to bear in knowing that at any moment those who protect and support them may be called upon to drive back the enemy. In all the sorties which have been made, the sound of the fight could be dis-

tinctly heard from the camp, and sometimes the operations could be viewed from it. I know of no instance in such cases in which a mother, a wife, a sister, or a daughter said or did aught to unnerve him who was going out to fight, or who faltered during the anxious time which ensued; and in this list of brave women I include both civil and military. These are women whose conduct in a time of great difficulty and danger one cannot honour too much.

"That they had good cause for anxiety may be gathered from the returns of killed and wounded of the two cavalry corps which have been raised in the town of Pretoria, and in which are serving many of their relatives. These corps, the Pretoria Carbineers and Nourse's Horse, have suffered severely, for, being mounted, they were always in the front. The following return of their numbers at the beginning of the war, and of their casualties during the two months they have been engaged on active service, will show this:—

"Pretoria Carbineers.

	Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.
	8	111
Killed in action, and died from wounds,	—	5
Wounded in action,	3	11
Percentage of casualties,	37	14

Nourse's Horse.

	4	64
Killed in action,	—	2
Wounded,	1	8
Percentage of casualties,	20	16

"From this it will be perceived that the percentage of killed and wounded has been very heavy in a short time.

"The enemy to be encountered are much more formidable than any as yet engaged by troops or volunteers in South Africa. They are composed of men who have been accustomed to the use of arms from their earliest youth, who are armed with breech-loading rifles of precision, are well mounted, and know the country thoroughly. It is worthy of note, also, that this is the first time that our troops have been exposed

to a breech-loading fire, and that the enemy are practised shots tends to make it all the more formidable.

"The arrangements for the protection of the camp and laagers are excellent, and the sanitary organisation has been so well devised that the rate of sickness is below the average. The military authorities have been unceasing in their attention to such measures; and the fact that there is so little sickness among people who are so overcrowded, reflects the highest credit upon them. I consider that we are all greatly indebted to Colonel Bellairs, and those serving under his command, for their exertions in this respect.

"The outbreak came so suddenly upon all that no one was able to make any preparation to meet it. Had not prompt measures been taken, therefore, to secure all the available provisions and stores, and thus prevent wasteful expenditure, there is little doubt that our necessaries of life would have run short. But owing to timely precautions, we have an ample stock for all our wants, and there is no cause to apprehend that there will not be sufficient to last until we can be relieved.

"The military situation and operations have been fully reported in the several despatches written by the officer commanding the troops, from which your lordship will be able to gather what has transpired since I last wrote.

"The weather has been most favourable; few can remember so cool and so seasonable a summer; and this has tended greatly towards the recovery of those wounded."

APPENDIX N.

District Order by Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District.

"Pretoria, *December* 22, 1880.

"The following will be the daily ration of supplies, issuable to all troops, volunteers, and wardsmen at Pretoria, viz.:—

"Bread 1¼ lb., or biscuit 1 lb., or flour 1 lb., or Boer meal 1 lb.

"Coffee ⅔ oz., sugar 2½ oz.

"Fresh potatoes ½ lb., or other vegetables ½ lb., or compressed vegetables 1 oz., or rice 2 oz., or beans 2 oz.

"Fresh or salt meat 1¼ lb., or preserved meat 1 lb., or *biltong* ½ lb.

"Tea 1-6th oz., salt ½ oz.

"*Light.*—Candles at usual scale to the troops and enrolled volunteers.

"Per marquee for civilians per diem, 2 oz.

"Per tent do. do. 2 oz.

"Fuel for all officers and men per diem, 3 lb.

"The regular forces and enrolled volunteers will draw in addition the usual allowance of Erbswurst, lime-juice, sugar, and pepper.

"These supplies will be issued to the remainder in the lines of defence on the recommendation of the several medical officers in charge, if the approval of the senior medical officer, Transvaal, be obtained; but, being limited, it is trusted that the utmost discretion may be used in asking for them.

"Women will be entitled to half the above rations, and children to one-fourth of the same. Children will be treated as adults after the age of twelve years.

"Children under one year of age will not receive any rations.

"Free rations will be issued to enrolled volunteers. Charges to the value of the supplies issued will be made against each civilian who has drawn from the commissariat, and is continuing to do so.[1]

"Issue to commence daily at 5 A.M.

"Extra supplies such as pickles, biscuits, maizena, arrowroot, corn flour, hams, bacon, tinned soups, fish, jam, condensed milk, cocoa and milk, essence of beef, &c. &c., may be drawn on the certificate of the medical officer in charge.

"Charges will be made for the value of these extras against the individuals who draw them.

"Disinfectants, consisting of Caparlicum, Condy's fluid,

[1] The Administrator subsequently directed that all civilians should have free rations.

Barnett's fluid, disinfecting powder, Jay's perfect purifier and lime, in no very large quantities are held by the commissariat, and are at the disposal of the several medical officers in charge; the demands must be countersigned by the senior medical officer.

"The utmost care will be exercised in demanding and issuing disinfectants, upon which the sanitary condition of the camp so much depends.

"Cavendish tobacco will be issued on repayment, to the troops and enrolled volunteers, at the rate of 3s. per lb. Soap by the bar at original weights will be issued to the troops at 6d. per lb., and to civilians at 9d. per lb.

"Forage rations will be issued daily at the following scale for the present:—

"English horses 10 lb. oat hay, 8 lb. mealies, ½ oz. salt.

"Officers' chargers 10 lb. oat hay, 8 lb. mealies, ½ oz. salt.

"Colonial horses 2 lb. oat hay, 8 lb. mealies, ½ oz. salt.

"Mules 10 lb. mealies or Kafir corn.

"The daily issues, inclusive of Sundays, will be made as follows, viz.:—

"The depot at the camp will supply all the troops and civilians within its lines as well as those quartered in Fort Royal.

"The depot at the jail will supply all the occupants within the jail and convent lines.

"Issues will be made to the respective hospital by these depots.

"Groceries will be issued to married families in addition, twice a-week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays."

APPENDIX N.*

From Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Pietermaritzburg.

"Pretoria, *February* 14, 1881.

"In continuation of my despatch of the 6th instant, I have

the honour to report, for the information of the Major-General commanding, that on the 8th instant a rebel Boer came in with a flag of truce, bringing a letter from Mr P. Kruger, Vice-President of the so-called South African Republic, to his Excellency the Administrator, requesting an exchange of political prisoners. A reply was returned to the effect that this could not be acceded to.

"2. On the following day a white flag came in from the Wonderboom Poort, with a letter from Mr H. J. Schoeman, a member of the former Boer Committee, and son of a Commandant-General of the late South African Republic, addressed to the Hon. P. Marais, member of the Executive Council, requesting to be allowed to meet that gentleman to devise means to arrest further bloodshed. An answer was sent back that he could come in to the Daas Poort for the purpose of speaking to Mr Marais the following morning, which he accordingly did. The conversation, however, resulted only in a suggestion that a Republic under the protectorate of England should form the basis of a treaty between ourselves and the rebels, and Mr Schoeman talking wildly of the successes of his people; that they expected to be soon joined by the Orange Free State and the Dutch party of the Cape Colony; that two cannon were close at hand; and that Sir George Pomeroy Colley had been driven off the frontier with heavy losses. Mr Schoeman was allowed to see his brother and sister, who are in our camp, in the presence of Mr Marais. He expressed a wish to see me, but I sent him a message, concurred in by Sir Owen Lanyon, declining, unless he could assure me that he would, on leaving, endeavour to bring about an unconditional surrender of the rebels. Mr Schoeman's intention in visiting us was, in my opinion, mainly to gather information as to the disposition of the townspeople, and the Dutch element in particular. I have no doubt that in every way he has been disappointed.

"3. Some hours before daylight, on the 12th instant, I sent out a mixed body of troops, under Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea, to attack the enemy's position at the Red House, E. Erasmus's farm, ten miles south of Pretoria, on the Heidel-

berg road, the scene of a previous attack on the 29th ultimo, already reported upon. Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea's despatch, with my remarks thereon, is attached. The object in view was not gained, resulting mainly from Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea and the officer commanding the mounted covering-party, Captain Sanctuary, Pretoria Carbineers, being both wounded and disabled at a time when their presence was necessary to ensure success.

"4. An ambulance-waggon with some wounded men, and Surgeon-Major Geoghegan in charge, having fallen into the hands of the enemy from having advanced too far into the fight, I, the same evening, instructed civil surgeon Dyer to proceed at once with two ambulance-waggons to the Red House, with a letter—copy enclosed—addressed to the Boer Commandant, requesting that the wounded and prisoners might be returned. This was acceded to, and they came in the following day. I have directed a court of inquiry to investigate and report upon the circumstances attending Surgeon-Major Geoghegan being made a prisoner, as also statements which have been made alleging that the attendants of the ambulance-waggon were fired upon and wounded.

"5. The temporary loss of Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea's services will be much felt. My last despatch drew attention to the embarrassment created through want of officers, and, of course, the withdrawal of an officer of Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea's position and capacity will greatly add to the strain. Energetic and daring, yet at the same time cautious, Lieutenant-Colonel Gildea has proved himself a most reliable and valuable officer, always ready and capable of coping with any emergency arising in camp or field. As my second in command, he has uniformly been of great assistance to me in organising means for defence, and for the regulation of the large body of townspeople in camp. As his wound is doing well, he will, I trust, in a few weeks, be fit for light duties.

"6. The daily decreasing number of effective horses, arising from horse-sickness and war casualties, gradually but surely lessens our power for offensive operations.

"7. Further intelligence has come in this morning from

Rustenburg to the 6th instant. I enclose a copy of a report made by 2d Lieutenant Despard, 2d Bn. 21st Foot, on whom the command of the fort had again devolved, Captain Auchinleck having been wounded for the second time within a few weeks—this time, I regret to say, seriously—while intrepidly leading a sortie made on the enemy's trenches. Two of our positions—Rustenburg and Lydenburg—are thus now held with 2d lieutenants in command."

APPENDIX O.

Enclosure 1 in No. 30 (c.—2950).

From President BRAND to General Sir E. WOOD.

"NEWCASTLE, *March* 3.

"I thank your Excellency for kindly forwarding Joubert's telegram. I shall write by to-day's post to Kruger, to be forwarded by express to Heidelberg from Kronstadt. I think every well-wisher of South Africa fervently prays that further bloodshed may be avoided. Could not some means be devised to suspend hostilities and offer facilities for negotiations. It was so hopeful before the fight in which Sir G. Colley unfortunately fell. I knew him personally, and esteemed him very much. His death is very much regretted, and all feel for Lady Colley. Your Excellency knows the good qualities of the Boers, and spoke well of the late Piet Uys, and of them. I am sure you will be able to contribute much to a peaceable settlement, which will rejoice the whole of South Africa, and ensure to her Majesty's Government the affections of the whole white population. I intend to leave Bloemfontein on the 7th (next Monday), and to be at Harrismith on or about the 15th instant."

Enclosure 2 in No. 30.

From General WOOD to President BRAND.

"NEWCASTLE, *March* 3.

"I gratefully acknowledge your Honour's continuous efforts in the cause of peace, and I cordially desire such may ensue without further bloodshed. I know and esteem many of those now in arms against my Sovereign, and I therefore regret doubly they will not, by desisting from armed opposition, open the door to arrangements which I conscientiously believe might be rendered acceptable to every reasonable Africander. Any reinforcements I require are placed at my disposal, but I would greatly prefer they should not be sent here. I would gladly abstain from making any movement in advance of my present position till the 10th March, if Boers on their part promised the same, and you believe peace would at once ensue. But your Honour will understand, as they not only blockade our garrisons in Transvaal, but occupy Natal territory, I cannot go further in my desire to stop the war. Any communication you may desire to have made to the Boers shall be transmitted through our posts. I hear Mr Kruger has gone to Rustenburg. In justice to our common friend Sir G. Colley, I state he did not receive any answer to his message or letter; and I read Mr Bok's letter, which was not received until Sir George was dead."

Enclosure 3 in No. 30.

From President BRAND, Bloemfontein, to General WOOD, Newcastle.

"*March* 4.

"I thank your Excellency for your telegram, and highly appreciate your sentiments. Could not your Excellency and Joubert and Kruger meet, and try and arrange some plan to suspend hostilities for a certain fixed time, to offer facilities for negotiation? I cannot do anything, for my letters take such a long time to reach, and I do not know what has been

done since the 17th ultimo in the way of peace negotiations. I gladly avail myself of your Excellency's kind offer to send a telegram to Joubert to ask him whether he could not meet your Excellency and arrange some plan by which hostilities could be stopped for a certain fixed time, to offer facilities for peace negotiations."

Enclosure 4 in No. 30.

From President BRAND to Commandant-General JOUBERT.

"*March* 4.

"I received a telegram from General Wood this morning in reply to mine which thanked him for the telegram he forwarded from you. It is evident that he is as anxious as we are to prevent further bloodshed. I have requested General Wood to forward this telegram to you, and I have asked him whether you and he could not meet and try to arrange some plan by which hostilities could be suspended for a certain fixed time, in order to offer facilities for peace negotiations. Send answer to General Wood."

Enclosure 5 in No. 30.

From Commandant-General JOUBERT, Lang's Nek, to President BRAND, Bloemfontein.

"*March* 4.

"Your telegram received in reply. Government and people of Transvaal fully agree with you that no further blood should be shed. It is alone in the power of the English Ministry to prevent, against whose attacks we defend ourselves. We are willing to accept every effort made by your Honour that peace may be restored as far as it is not in direct opposition to our liberty. Will you forward your telegram at once to President Kruger?"

Enclosure 6 in No. 30.

From JOUBERT to General WOOD, Newcastle.

"*March* 4.

"I herewith enclose a telegram received by me from Presi-

dent Brand. I shall have pleasure in learning how far you will be ready to co-operate in the serious proposition therein contained, in order that I may as speedily as possible inform my patrols, as also the different camps in the Republic, in the hope of a reply."

Enclosure 7 in No. 30.

From General WOOD to Commandant-General JOUBERT, Lang's Nek.

"*March* 5.

"I will meet you and any three Dutch gentlemen half-way between Prospect Camp and Nek to-morrow, at noon, if I hear from you this evening."

Enclosure 10 in No. 30.

Commandant-General JOUBERT to General WOOD.

"*March* 5.

"Your telegram received. In reply, I shall willingly be ready to meet you to-morrow at 12."

Enclosure 11 in No. 30.

"*Near* MOUNT PROSPECT,
March 6, 1881.

Present at Meeting:

British.	*Boer.*
Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood.	Mr Piet Joubert.
Major Fraser.	Mr D. C. Uys.
Captain Maude.	Mr C. J. Joubert.
Mr Thornborough Cropper.	Mr G. H. Fouclire.

Mr A. J. Forster, Interpreter."

HEADS of CONDITIONS of an ARMISTICE proposed to be agreed between the BRITISH and BOER FORCES.

"Be it understood that the object of this armistice is to

allow time for Mr Kruger to consider and reply to the communications that may pass between the representative sides for the sake of procuring a peaceable settlement of the points at issue.

"I, Sir Evelyn Wood, agree, on the part of her Majesty's British Government, and I, Piet Joubert, agree, on the part of the Transvaal Boers' Government, for a cessation of hostilities from noon on the 6th March 1881 till midnight on Monday the 14th of March 1881. The following to be the conditions:—

"Schedule I.—During that time each side promises to make no forward movement in advance of its present positions neither by armed parties nor by scouts; but each retains its liberty of movement within its own lines.

"Schedule II.—That Sir Evelyn Wood or his successor is free to send eight days' provisions and firewood, but no ammunition, through Boer lines, for all his garrisons in the Transvaal, if he think proper to do so. That the Boer officers ( ) undertake to pass it to such garrisons, and, equally with the British garrisons, to suspend all hostilities for eight days subsequent to the arrival of the provisions; and that all persons sent with the waggons shall return with them, without, however, entering the places they are sent to, and not remain to augment the garrisons to which they bring provisions. Such persons, the waggons, and conductors, to be considered neutral until they are again within British lines.

"Schedule III.—That Piet Joubert undertakes to send notice of the conditions of the armistice at once to the respective garrisons and to the Boer commanders there. That he will use his influence to induce these commanders to allow the withdrawal within the British lines in Natal of all wounded in the aforesaid garrisons.

"Evelyn Wood,
Major-General.

"P. J. Joubert,
Commandant-General."

Enclosure 12 in No. 30.

TERMS of four days' prolongation of Armistice at Meeting held March 14, 1881.

"It is hereby agreed between Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood, K.C.B., commanding her Majesty's forces, on the one hand, and Mr P. Joubert, commanding the Boer forces, on the other hand, that, in order to give time for the arrival of Mr Kruger, delayed by bad weather, and for the reception of a telegram expected from England, the armistice now existing between the aforesaid shall be extended till midnight the 18th instant—that is to say, for four days longer."

Conditions of said Armistice.

"Schedule I.—The conditions of existing armistice to remain unaltered; except that, in consideration of the prolongation for four days, General Wood has the option of sending four days' more provisions to those garrisons which have already received eight days, and twelve days' provisions to those garrisons which have not yet received any provisions.

"Schedule II.—As provided in former agreement, hostilities will only be suspended at several garrisons for the four or twelve days after the arrival of the provisions at the garrisons. Also, one officer may accompany each provision column, but he and his conductor and driver are to be strictly neutral.

"Schedule III.—This armistice is not to prevent General Wood from sending his post as usual.

"Agreed to at tent under Lang's Nek this 14th day of March 1881.

"EVELYN WOOD,
Major-General.
"PIET JOUBERT,
Commandant-General."

No. 102.—SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES to Sir EVELYN WOOD.

"*12th March*, 8 P.M.

"Inform Boer leaders that, if Boers will undertake to desist

from armed opposition and disperse to their homes, we are prepared to name the following as Commissioners: Sir H. Robinson, Chief Justice De Villiers, and yourself. President Brand would be asked to be present at proceedings as representing friendly State.

"Commission would be authorised to consider following points: complete self-government under British suzerainty, with British Resident at Pretoria, and provisions for protection of native interests and as to frontier affairs. Control of relations with foreign Powers to be reserved.

"It would be well, also, to consider scheme for severance of territory eastward, to divide Transvaal from Zulus and Swazis, retaining great native districts on the east and north-east.

"Amnesty to be granted as stated in my telegram to you of 8th.

"You may consent to prolongation of armistice till 18th, if desired by Boer leaders, in order to give time for answer."

No. 107.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 10.30 P.M., 14th March 1881.)

"Mount Prospect, 14*th March*, 3.20 P.M.

"Armistice prolonged on original basis to midnight on the 18th, to allow time for Kruger's arrival."

No. 108.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 7.10 P.M., 15th March 1881.)

"Mount Prospect, 15*th March*, 12.30 P.M.

"Kruger arrived, asks for meeting at once; have appointed 9 to-morrow morning. I yesterday communicated first part of your telegram of 12th down to names of Commissioners. Joubert said privately to me that if they retired from Nek, though he would, while I command, accept my promise not to follow them up, would probably require written promise from

English Government. Authorise me, if necessary, to give such. May I read from 'desist—to homes' in yours of 12th to mean withdrawal from Nek, and vicinity of roads, and cessation of armed opposition; it would be hard to ascertain if they have really dispersed."

No. 111.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

(Sent 10.45 A.M., 16th March 1881.)

"15*th March*.

"I see no objection to your definition of cessation from armed opposition. What is essential is that it should be a real dispersion of armed force. If Boers retire, it is not intended that you should follow them with troops, and you may give engagement to that effect; but there must be free peaceful intercourse throughout Transvaal for all persons, as before outbreak."

No. 109.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 7.45 P.M., 15th March 1881.)

"Mount Prospect, 7.20 P.M., 15*th March*.

"Have arranged to meet Kruger and Joubert at 9 to-morrow; and that they may be prepared, have sent them copies of your telegrams of 8th and (?) 12th, omitting in last all words from 'it would be well' to words 'east and north-east,' and inserting words 'within certain territorial limits,' after 'complete self-government.' Please let me know your views on question what should be boundary; it is sure to be raised."

No. 110.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

"15*th March*, 11 P.M.

"My telegram of 12th only indicated general heads. If

principle of division acceptable, precise boundary and other details would be left to Commission."

No. 112.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 2.15 A.M., 17th March 1881.)

"Mount Prospect, 16*th March*, 6 P.M.

"Have conferred since 10 A.M. Result: Boer leaders state they accept, to a great extent, and generally, the proposition contained in your telegrams of 8th and 12th; but they make withdrawal from Nek and dispersion depend upon the following concession, that the Boers be represented on the Commission in the proportion of two to three. They further express the hope that in order they may have a fair chance of maintaining order in the Transvaal, instructions may be given to withdraw garrisons from Transvaal without waiting for the assembly of the Commission. It is agreed that the word dispersion will not prevent the Boers retaining sufficient forces to support their Government internally. Joubert says plainly that he expects trouble from English party. I am most anxious for an early reply."

No. 113.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 3 A.M., 17th March 1881.)

"Mount Prospect, 16*th March*, 9.5 P.M.

"*Précis* of interview with Boer leaders. Read conditions extracted from your telegrams of 8th and 12th as explained by mine of 15th. Kruger approved generally of them as basis of peace, but asked, had I a power to recognise him as representing Boer Government, and did I represent English? Replied, Yes. Objected to proposed Commission as one-sided. Why not make peace at once without Commission? Replied, Had not power. Then there must be Boers on Commission. After much talk he proposed two Boers in five. Kruger then

said that we must withdraw troops from Transvaal garrisons, if he consented to disperse. Replied, Was sure this would not be granted. How could we leave Transvaal before Commission said what Transvaal was? Kruger said, Transvaal is what you annexed, and have since held. Kruger consented to residents, but said that Government would deal with interior native affairs, and accepted suzerainty, as explained by me. It appeared clear that they fear trouble from loyal English, and therefore cannot entirely disperse their own, while they are anxious to get rid of English, forces. I do not think they realise they may have to yield extensive (?) tract to native tribes; and if they contemplated chance of Commission arranging this, they would not withdraw from Nek. After eight hours' talk I am confirmed in the opinion expressed in my telegram of 5th instant, words 131 to 149 [viz., 'Considering the disasters we have sustained, I think the happiest result will be, that after accelerating successful action.']"

No. 115.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

(Despatched from Colonial Office, 6.30 P.M.)

"*17th March.*

"The suggestion for Royal Commission came from Boers. We agreed to it, in belief that it was the most convenient way of inquiring into facts and considering details. Commission would consider all representations and would make recommendations, but not finally decide. We could not agree to mixed Commission, but Commissioners would meet representatives of Boers and discuss all matters with them.

"You report that of the points mentioned in my telegram of 12th instant, suzerainty and resident are accepted, and we infer that control of foreign relations and frontier affairs is also accepted.

"With regard to interior native affairs, Commission would have to consider what securities should be taken as to future treatment of natives. As to rearrangement of territorial

limits, we never contemplated that territory north of Vaal River and west of Oliphant's River should be severed from Transvaal. Commission would consider how much, if any, of the territory to the east of a line practically thirtieth parallel of longitude should be retained. Joubert seems to have been favourable so far as concerns territory south of Vaal River, and we think a separation of the Transvaal territory from such native tribes as Zulus and Swazis may prove to be as much, if not more, for interest of Boers as of ourselves.

"As regards dispersion, we understand that Boers are disposed to agree generally to our terms as explained in your telegram of 15th; but our troops must remain in Transvaal till final settlement, and it will be their duty to prevent any party from using the situation to the prejudice of Boers.

"You may use your discretion as to further prolongation of armistice."

No. 119.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received at the Colonial Office, 8.30 p.m., 18th March 1881.)

"Mount Prospect, 18*th March*, 4 p.m.

"Kruger and Pretorius unwell. At Joubert's request prolonged armistice for three days to consider your telegram 17th, and advise with Brand, expected to-morrow. No objection made at meeting 16th to control foreign relations and resident for supervision native affairs."

No. 121.—Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Evelyn Wood.

"20*th March*, 11 p.m.

"I have not yet heard from you result of communications with Boers as to my telegram of 17th.

"We rely on you, unless military necessity requires immediate action, to give us time to consider points on which you may be unable to come to agreement with Boer leaders."

No. 122.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

"Mount Prospect, 21*st March*, 3 p.m.

"Conferring since 8 a.m.; not certain yet, but anticipate peaceful solution. Your telegram of yesterday delayed."

No. 123.—Sir Evelyn Wood to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Received, Colonial Office, 4 a.m., 22d March 1881.)

"Mount Prospect, 21*st March*, 9.25 p.m.

"After sitting 12½ hours without intermission, the following is an epitome, attested by the leaders and me, as correctly showing proceedings, which proceedings have been signed by the Boers and by me, subject to your ratification. I urge your approval, and, if you can, to shorten the interval to four months; authorise me to ratify proceedings, when Boers will disperse. Armistice prolonged for 48 hours. Brand's presence has been invaluable.

"The Boer leaders having previously accepted telegraphs of 8th and 12th, except in two points since abandoned, and having been acknowledged as leaders by Sir Evelyn Wood, have accepted the principle of suzerainty as defined by him—viz., that the country has entire self-government as regards its own interior affairs, but that it cannot take action against, or with an outside Power, without permission of the suzerain. They agree to recognise a British Resident at the future capital of the country with such functions as the British Government may decide on the recommendation of the Royal Commission, and also that the Royal Commission should consider the provisions for the protection of native interests, and as to frontier affairs that control of relations with foreign Powers should be reserved.

"Sir E. Wood acknowledged the right of the Transvaal people to complete self-government, subject to suzerain rights. The Boer leaders stated they would gladly co-operate with her

Majesty's Government in bringing to justice those who have committed or are directly responsible for acts contrary to civilised warfare. As the Boers have agreed to withdraw from the Nek and disperse to their homes, Sir E. Wood promises that he will not take possession of that position, nor follow them up with troops, nor send ammunition into the Transvaal. The Boer leaders accept the terms offered in the telegram of the 17th March. They state we will trust to the British Government to give to us complete self-government as soon as possible, and, at latest, within six months, it being understood that no civil action be entertained in respect of proceedings taken during or in reference to the war, and equally no action shall be taken in respect of taxation until the self-government is accorded.

"We further trust that if the Royal Commission considers any separation of land to the east of the thirtieth degree of longitude to be necessary, such Commission will not recommend the separation of more land than is necessary for the purposes of the English policy, as indicated in the telegram of 17th March. We accept the arrangement proposed by Sir E. Wood about exchange of property captured during the war or taken over at the annexation, the exchange to be carried out when self-government is fully accorded."

APPENDIX P.

The memorial alluded to at p. 237 is still unerected, although the consent of the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's, for its being placed in the crypt of the Cathedral, was obtained by Sir William Bellairs so long ago as February 1883. Vexatious delays have arisen from repeated references having to be made to Pretoria, and other causes; and notwithstanding the efforts made by Lieutenant-Colonel Le Mesurier, R.E., the honorary secretary, acting for the members of a now scattered committee, to bring about agreement and a satisfactory arrangement.

The monument is intended to be a large memorial brass, with —as originally agreed upon—the following inscription, figures representing a British soldier and a mounted volunteer being on either side, and the names of the fallen underneath :—

"This monument, erected by Comrades, Relations, and Friends, is sacred to the memory of all those who, belonging to the besieged garrisons and forces in the Transvaal, lost their lives whilst fighting for Queen and Country during the heroic defence of that Province against the Boers, from December 16th 1880, to March 31st 1881."

BRONKHORST SPRUIT.

94TH FOOT.

Lieut.-Colonel	P. R. Anstruther.	Corporal	James M'Guilton.
Captain	S. H. M'L. Nairne.	L.-Corporal	Charles Brown.
"	Jas. MacSwiney.	"	Francis Dennis.
Lieut. & Adjt.	H. A. C. Harrison.	"	William Dickens.
Sergeant	Christopher Cummins.	"	J. Dickenson.
"	Thomas Moloney.	"	Edward Donaldson.
"	Winslow Percival.	"	Gregory Phillips.
"	John Porter.	"	Wm. Philpotts.
"	Henry Tovell.	"	Wm. Raper.
"	Walton Webb.	"	Wm. Rogers.
L.-Sergeant	A. Rooker.		

Privates.

W. Alexander.	J. Gibson.	J. Maynard.
James Atkinson	Thomas Green.	Walter Morris.
Richard Ayres.	Patrick Hickey.	Michael Murphy.
Jesse Baker.	Michael Hogan.	J. Murray.
William Bell.	J. Hongham.	W. Price.
Stephen Belsey.	J. Howes.	Samuel Rowan.
W. J. Brown.	James Jenner.	A. Slater.
Thomas Brown.	John Johnson.	John Starkie.
Thomas Bryan.	Henry Kerr.	Eugene Sullivan.
Henry Carlin.	Geo. H. Lee.	J. Tolan.
Charles Chamberlain.	Michael M'Donald.	Francis Travers.
Frederick Crick.	J. M'Hugh.	David Ward.
J. Cummins.	Wm. M'Kee.	Matthew Warren.
Samuel Dunning.	Isaac M'Kew.	Nathaniel Whitstone.
James Finegan.	Patrick M'Phillips.	J. Wharton.
Thomas Grimes.	James M'Veigh.	Joseph Williams.
John Guernsey.	John Mahoney.	J. Williams.
J. Gallagher.	Charles Martin.	

A. S. Corps	Sergeant	W. E. Rollings.
"	Private	G. Robertson.
Civilian	Conductor	Bancroft.
Commis. and Trans. Staff	D.-A.-C.-General	E. J. S. Carter.

PRETORIA.

N Batt., 5th Brigade, Royal Artillery	Q.-Master Sergt.	W. Briery.
2d Batt., 21st R. S. Fusiliers	Col.-Sergeant	G. Finch.
" "	Lance-Corporal	T. Cowie.
" "	Private	Charles Byrne.
" "	"	R. Flynn.
" "	"	E. King.
" "	"	E. Thomas.
A. H. Corps	"	W. Humphreys.
Pretoria Carbineers	Captain	Henry Sanctuary.
" "	Sergeant-Major	Thomas Simpson.
" "	Trooper	J. Charmbury.
" "	"	A. J. Cogan.
" "	"	W. Dickens.
" "	"	W. Erasmus.
" "	"	E. A. Gribbon.
" "	"	C. S. Hawes.
Nourse's Horse	"	James Long.

POTCHEFSTROOM.

N Batt., 5th Brigade, Royal Artillery	Sergeant	J. Kelvington.
" " "	Driver	Green.
" " "	Gunner	Larkins.
" " "	Driver	Unsworth.
" " "	"	Walsh.
2d Batt., 21st R. S. Fusiliers	Captain	A. L. Falls.
" "	Corporal	J. Gartshore.

Privates.

J. Bedford.	W. Grant.	J. Leishman.
D. Birmingham.	J. Jones.	J. Mullen.
W. Boyd.	J. Jordan.	H. Roberts.
C. Brownlie.	W. Kennan.	J. Thornback.
F. Dobbs.	A. Laird.	J. Watson.

Civilian	Volunteer	H. Taylor.
Native	Leader	Class Abrams.

MARABASTADT.

94th Foot	Colour-Sergeant	James Freeth.
Transvaal Mounted Police	Sergeant	Joseph M'Gonigle.
"	Trooper	Morgan.
Civilian	Conductor	C. H. Chinn.

LYDENBURG.

94th Foot	Sergeant	John Loch Cowdy.
"	Lance-Corporal	G. Hatterall.
Volunteers	Private	R. R. Macdonald.
"	"	James Stewart.

STANDERTON.

58th Foot	Private	William Crann.
"	"	John Hearn.
94th Foot	"	George Atkinson.
Standerton Mounted Volunteers	Trooper	G. Bruce Hall.
"	"	Thomas Walsh.

WAKKERSTROOM.

58th Foot	Private	William Bennett.
"	"	Owen Byrne.

APPENDIX Q.

An officer contributes the following reflections, having reference to baneful efforts made from time to time to bring about an alteration in seniority promotion to the higher ranks of the army :—

"Selection, when resorted to otherwise than sparingly and for very well-founded reasons, which are made public—that is, selection by passing over other officers of high field-rank, who with long and tried service have proved their capacity for more responsible employment—cannot but tend to disgust, 'take the heart out of,' and lessen the efficiency of many valuable officers. The service does not benefit and the public suffer. Officers of well-ascertained unfitness should, of course, be set aside; but none who have attained high field-rank should be passed over without sufficient cause. It is not always possible, even with the purest intentions, to single out the best officers; and, with erring human nature, the choice would be apt too often to degenerate into mere bringing forward favourites, or men to further a purpose, political or otherwise, so passing over and causing the premature retirement of numerous proved excellent officers, whose sole disqualifications—in the eyes of those exercising the power of selection—might be that they were comparatively unknown to what is termed society, or else were not considered the sufficiently

pliable instruments sought for. It has, moreover, not unfrequently happened that the brilliant expectations entertained of an officer have been strangely falsified when practically tested; while another, ignored at one time, has subsequently been discovered to develop the very qualities required. Theoretical training will not always give, or examinations prove, the possession of the attributes necessary in a commander.

"Such a mode of promotion is also detrimental, as inducing a deplorable practice—which some assert has been on the increase of late years—of junior officers taking every opportunity, other than straightforward or open, for decrying the actions, motives, or services of those immediately above or senior to them in dates of commission, thus hoping to pass over or supplant them in estimation. What has been called 'clandestine' correspondence is even resorted to, in the endeavour to bring themselves more prominently in view, carried on by private letters—'behind the backs,' so to say, of their military commanders or seniors—with high and influential civil or military officials; or diaries and letters, ostensibly for family reading, are industriously passed on for the perusal of others,—some of the highest in the realm being perhaps reached in this way, even during the progress of a campaign."

THE END.

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